

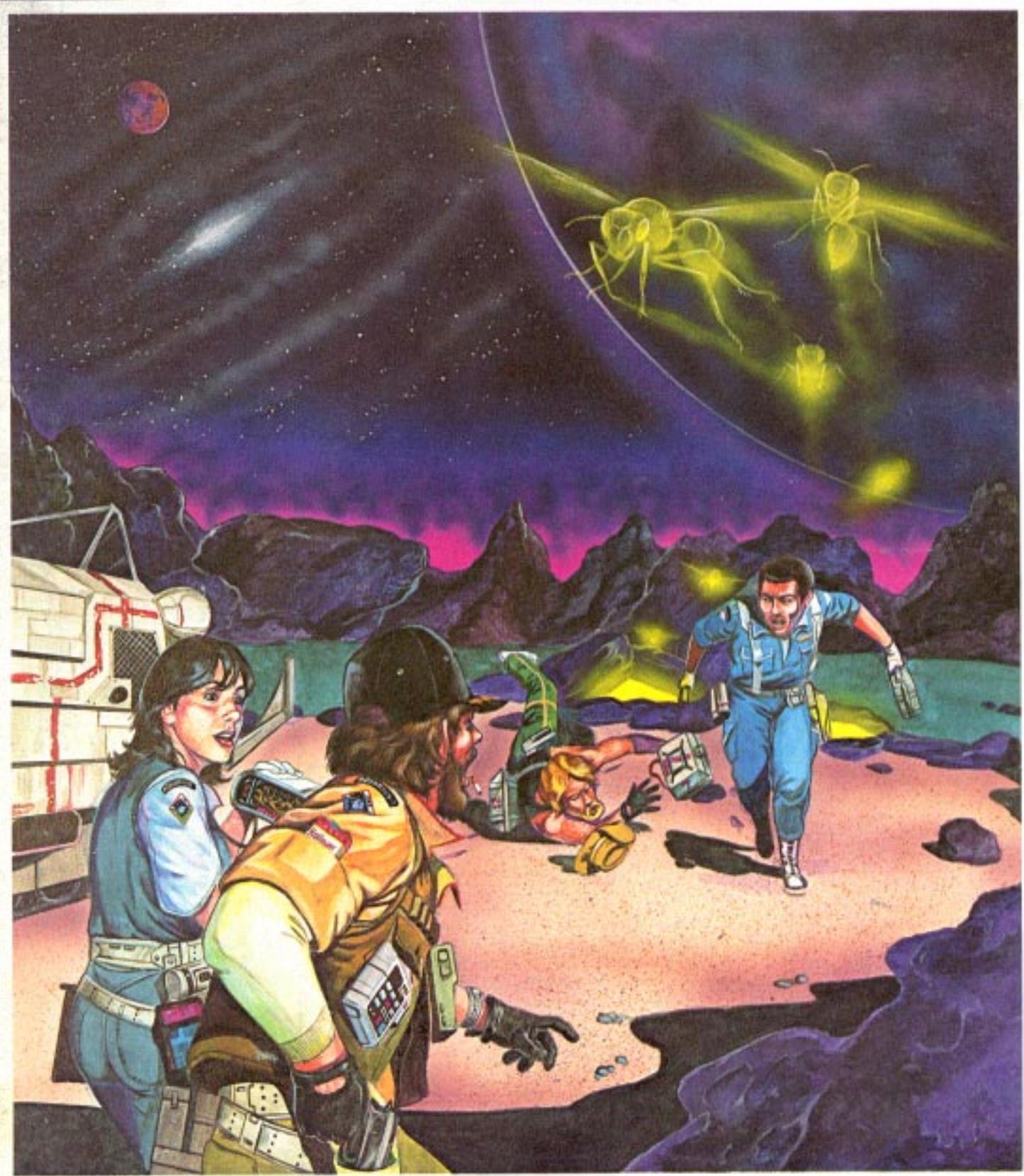
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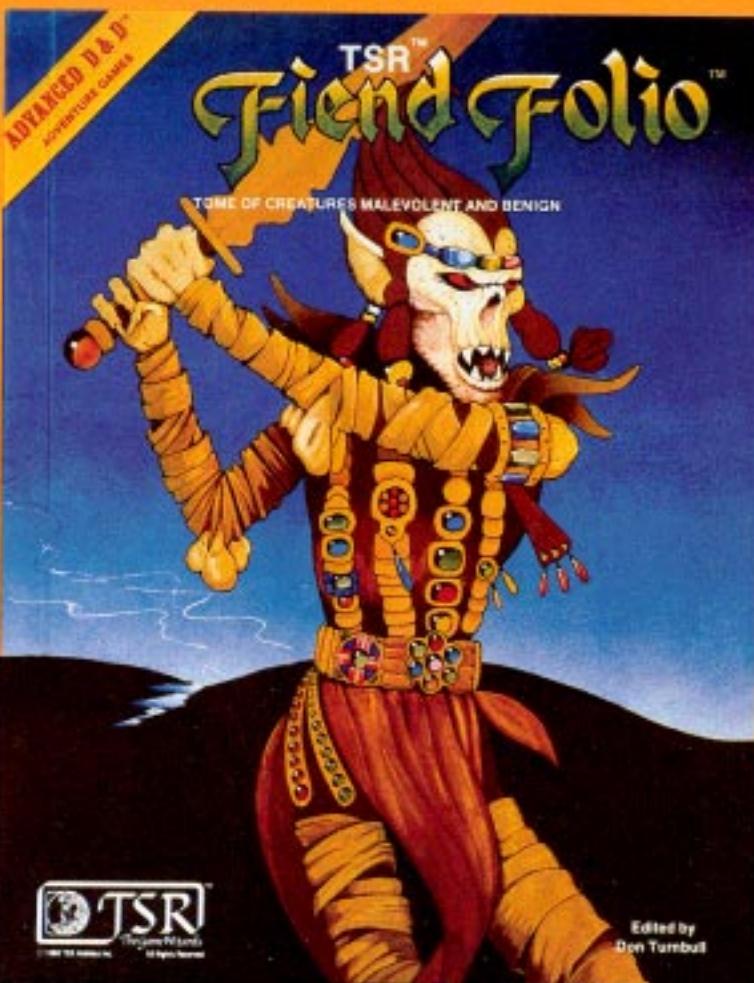
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A decorative banner for "DRAGON RUMBLIES". The banner is framed by a stylized dragon head on the left and a dragon's mouth on the right, both rendered in a dark, textured style. The central banner is a light color with the words "DRAGON RUMBLIES" in a bold, serif font. The "R" in "DRAGON" and the "R" in "RUMBLIES" are particularly large and ornate. Below the banner, the artist's signature "JAMES 79" is visible.

There are a lot of nice things about writing for a magazine that's read by a few hundred thousand people. One of the less obvious "nice things" is this: If we make a mistake, it doesn't go unnoticed. At least one of those hundreds of thousands of people will let us know we goofed, and then we get a chance to set things straight.

Case in point: Lauren Kingman of Hyde Park, N.Y., wrote us to unmask what he called "an attempt to reap obscene profits from ignorant gamers (and to successfully con the DRAGON's editor-in-chief)."

His gripe is with SPELLBINDERS, a product of Orisek Industries. The set of notebook/binders was one of several new game-related accessories reviewed by yours truly in issue #55 of DRAGON™ Magazine. The largest of the set, bearing an \$8.95 price tag, is, in Lauren's words, "neither original, new, or unique.... I can detect no difference between SPELLBINDERS and what are known in the stationery trade as 'easel-back presentation binders.'

Lauren chides me — and rightfully so — for characterizing the product as "original." Honest, I never heard of an easel-back presentation binder until I got his letter. And now that I know, I cringe when I scan the part of the review that says, "Orisek Industries is a company that makes 'How come nobody thought of that before?' products."

Apparently, somebody had thought of that before, and it was presumptuous of me to suggest that the concept of the easel-back binder originated at Orisek Industries. I hasten to point out that the company made no such claim.

Secondly, Lauren takes issue with the price. "These binders have made my DMing easier for a long time," he writes. "They can be bought at most stationery stores for about \$4.... I suggest that (a DM) buy an easel-back presentation binder and take the \$5 he just saved and apply it towards a game accessory whose price is justified by development and production costs."

Since I've never seen an easel-back binder in a stationery store, I don't know what Lauren's getting for his four-dollar investment. Maybe the SPELLBINDERS notebook is significantly stronger or larger or more durable than the average easel-back binder. Maybe the differences, if there are any, make the Orisek

product worth its price. That decision is up to the customer. In this case, all we can really do — and should have done four issues ago — is to let you know all the facts when there's a choice to be made.

I'm far from convinced that SPELL-BINDERS is "an attempt to reap obscene profits from ignorant gamers." Orisek Industries is a small company that produces relatively small quantities of its products. When you don't manufacture very many copies of something, each one costs quite a lot to make. The companies that make "normal" easel-back binders presumably have a much larger market for their product, and can afford to produce more copies at a much lower price per unit. Lauren has a right to complain about the price, in a comparative sense, but not the right to accuse anybody of making "obscene profits."

Surely other readers reacted the same way as Lauren when they read the review of SPELLBINDERS. I assume that to be so, even though he was the only person who called the mistake to our attention. (If the stationery store in Hyde Park, N.Y., is the only place easel-back binders are sold, I've just made a fool of myself twice over.) To Lauren and the others like him, I apologize for my ignorance. And this "ignorant editor" owes a greater apology to all "ignorant gamers" out there who might have been misled by what was said, or not said, in the review.



# Dragon

**March 1982**

|                             |   |
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**C**his issue of DRAGON™ Magazine is specially for those of you whose versions of "fantasy" have more to do with planets than planes of existence, more with lasers than longbows. Counting the cover painting and a spread of 23 pages inside, this magazine has more science-fiction material in it than we've ever used in a single issue before.

Our center 16 pages are filled with *Exonidas Spaceport*, a setting described in meticulous detail by author Jeff Swycaffer and designed for use in *Traveller™* games. Rather than presenting one narrow situation for characters to figure their way into and out of, *Exonidas* is a package of opportunities, an environment from which dozens of different sorts of adventures could spring. Everything we and Jeff could think of is included in the package, all the way from a diagram of the entire solar system down to where everyone sits in the offices of Torman and Son.

Jim Holloway and his talented airbrush (or maybe that should be "talented Jim Holloway and his airbrush") provided this month's cover, a portrayal of the climactic scene from *Skitterbugging*, a science-fiction tale which precedes the *Exonidas* section. Between the story and the spaceport is a page devoted to descriptions of the people and things from the story in *Traveller* terminology. Further connections are left for you to make: Could the skitterbuggers prosper in a place like Horiteur? Are there mist wasps holed up in the hills of Theury?

All that talk about outer space doesn't mean there isn't plenty of material inside for fans of the D&D® and AD&DTM games. First and foremost among the "fantasy" features is *From the Sorcerer's Scroll*, wherein Gary Gygax introduces you to the magic of cantrips and provides official descriptions of two new AD&D items, the *Advanced Illusion* spell and the *Philosopher's Stone*.

We don't need a fortune teller to be sure that A.D. Rogan's article on gypsies will be well accepted by AD&D gamers. The historical and legendary characteristics of gypsies combine to make a potent and playable new character type. Speaking of potent, check out the Demonic Knights of Doom, as described by Rob Kuntz in the debut of a new regular feature about happenings in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting. When one of these guys asks you whose side you're on, you'd better have a quick answer — and it better be the right one.

Following in the format of his articles on dwarves in our last issue, contributing editor Roger Moore presents "The halfling point of view" and "The gods of the halflings." Just in back of that seven-page section is a detailed story on particular poisons from Larry DiTillio's campaign that we hope you'll find easy to swallow.

Making up monsters is easy. Making up good monsters is something else altogether, as Lew Pulsipher points out in "Make monsters, not monstrosities." After you've read about Lew's guidelines, turn to the Bestiary and see how well you think this month's monster makers have done.

A quintet of characters from famous fiction, ranging from the (almost) ordinary to the extraordinary, are offered for your edification in *Giants in the Earth*.

Reviewer Tony Watson gives his evaluations of *Starfire III: Empires* and *Demonlord* in Dragon's Augury. Chris Henderson looks at new releases from the world of literature in the most colorful installment of "Off the Shelf" we've ever published, and two more pages' worth of miniatures and other game accessories are covered in *Figuratively Speaking*. And miniatures are also on Phil Foglio's mind, as you'll see in "What's New." Now, get the lead out and start reading. — KM

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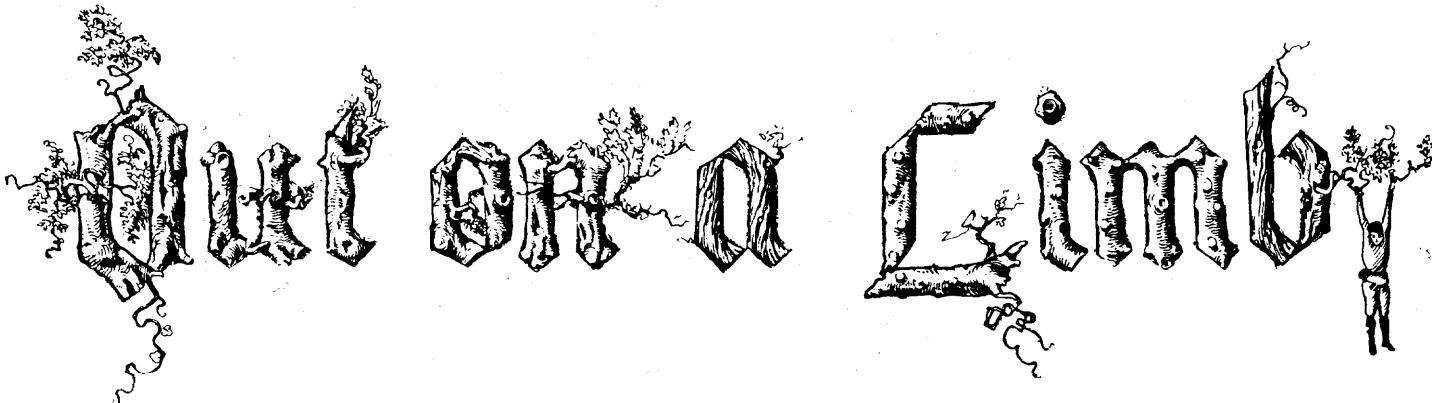
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## 'PC demigods'

Dear Editor:

Enough is indeed enough. A hearty thanks to Greg Fox for his letter of protest (issue #55) concerning "player-character demi-gods," i.e. those PCs stronger than Moradin, faster than Corellon, and possessing magical items to rival those of Thoth. I have recently encountered a player/DM with the following character/NPC: a 20th/25th-level human fighter/magic-user, all stats between 18 and 25 (heavily weighted toward the upper end, of course), who owns an army of 1,000 dragons (special hybrids, each using two different types of breath weapons), an ogre magi astride each one. When asked what possible use this reptilian armada could be put to, he related his plans for attaching a cable to each one and using them to move his castle to a nearby island. And, finally, among his hundreds of magical items, he has a *rod of curing/resurrection* with an infinite number of charges.

Ugh! And as if that weren't enough, when I related this to a friend of mine, he merely sneered derisively and began telling me about what his 50th-level ranger (D:30, S:35) would do to such a wimp. I began to feel dizzy.

So, having had personal experience with the PC demigod problem, I must applaud the first part of Mr. Fox's letter. His observations concerning experience points, however, are not indisputable.

Mr. Fox tells us that (gasp) a player actually (egad) wanted experience points for being hit in combat. What's the big deal? As you rise in levels, you not only progress on the combat tables, but you gain hit points, and as we are told on page 82 of the DMG, these increasing hit points do not reflect an ability to sustain an increasing amount of physical damage, but the skill and fatigue involved in avoiding damage. Therefore, a character who is hit in melee has gained (if he survives) nearly as much experience (ah, next time I dodge thus and parry so) as a character who hits. I tend to give these characters one-half share of experience points, providing they were not rendered unconscious, in which case I doubt they were paying attention to their combat abilities.

This is not an unrealistic interpretation of experience, especially in light of some other methods of gaining experience points, such as finding treasure. Here we find a rule that the AD&D game could do without. Characters in my milieu get no experience points for treasure, and advance quickly enough anyway. I suppose there may be an explanation somewhere as to why this system was ever incorporated, but I have been unable to find it — only in an ill-thought-out paragraph on page 85 of

the DMG explaining, in essence, that after all, AD&D is "only a game" and that "compromises must be made." The paragraph then goes on to state that real fighters would get real experience by "exercising, riding, smiting pelts, and tilting at the lists...." Somehow I believe that one would gain a bit more experience by battling a troll than by fencing with a friend.

Mr. Gygax has made an unforgivable mistake here, and that mistake is underrating his own gaming system. In my experience, AD&D is the best role-playing game on the market, and, no, Mr. Gygax, concessions do not have to be made. It in no way harms characters to receive gold without the experience that supposedly goes along with it—after all, the two can never be mutually exclusive. I have never encountered the smallest pile of copper that was not guarded by something which considered it valuable — and that something is worth experience points.

Bill Knorpp  
DeSoto, Mo.

## 'Spice and intrigue'

Dear Editor:

I read an article in Up on a Soapbox in DRAGON #57 that upset me greatly. It was the article about how no "...intelligent AD&D™ player would deliberately choose to play a character of evil alignment." I have had many experiences with evil player characters, both as a Dungeon Master and as a player, and I have found that evil characters not only have the most fun, but they add spice and intrigue to the campaign, which helps the other players enjoy it more.

Brian Blume (the author) said that in real life evil characters are ostracized from society; that no one trusts them or cooperates with them. In real life, who are the evil people? Are they the thieves and robbers who terrorize people and roam the streets? Yes, sometimes; but evil also abounds in government, big business, and many other respectable professions. Evil and criminal are not always synonymous. Evil merely implies that the person is out for his own good and he doesn't care who gets trampled in the process. There are thousands of people who fit this description who have not been ostracized from the community. Many are the most trusted members of corporations and businesses.

He stated that no one can trust the evil character because the evil character will not cooperate with anyone. On the contrary, the evil character will cooperate with anyone he

feels he can use to further his own ends. A thief will need fighter cover in an adventure to help him survive; an assassin will welcome the help of spell casters and other adventurers to cover his assassination attempts, and an evil warlord will surround himself with other characters to prevent personal injury from enemies. Also, evil characters must advance in levels, and will travel with a party and cooperate in hopes of receiving treasure and experience. As for being well played, an assassin may indeed backstab when an adventure is over for the extra experience, and a thief may very well pick party pockets (with the party none the wiser). Of course, a thief who has sprung traps and opened locks for a party as well as surprising opponents will definitely be appreciated, if not trusted.

Mr. Blume also says that when an evil character begins to dominate other party members, the group will dissolve in chaos. In the group I am DM for, the only evil player character in the bunch is the second most powerful character in the group (next to a druid). He plays very independently and is often away from the party, but he does benefit them in some ways. He also keeps the other characters on their toes, which keeps them from getting too lax. His presence is appreciated in the campaign. In another campaign, my friend and I play a pair of neutral evil characters who happen to be twin brothers. We are, by a small margin, the two most powerful characters in the party. The party itself is almost exclusively evil and all the players are very independent. No one trusts anyone else past basic bodily defense, and "party treasure" is a rarity. All the players and the Dungeon Master agree this campaign is one of the best they have ever known.

Christopher Miller  
Grove City, Pa.

## Weapon skill

Dear Editor:

The Leonard's Tiny Hut article concerning the use of sword and shield (#57) was a commendable article, and it set me to thinking. For quite some time, I have been using a weapons skill system that I others might be interested in. One of the enormous improvements between the D&D and AD&D game systems is the proficiency rules. However, although these rules provide for the process of learning to use different weapons, there is no way for a character to excel in any one weapon. With the system I devised, an individual may gain

(Turn to page 66)



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# Cantrips: Minor magics for would-be wizards

by Gary Gygax

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Elsewhere in this magazine is a new column. That, Gentle Reader, is where news of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting, as well as material for new adventures therein, will be aired. This separation is made to avoid any confusion. He-rein will be found material for adventures in any ADVANCED D&D® campaign, and occasionally DUNGEONS & DRAG-ONS® material too. The new column will adhere strictly to the Greyhawk campaign and what goes on there. So if you are bent on immediate news from the Flanaess, please look elsewhere. What follows is strictly in the AD&D™ gaming realm.

This is not to say that no further word from me will be read in the columns pertaining to Greyhawk, for I am still laboring on the updating — as well as on (don't faint) T2 and a pair of other modules, "The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun" (a scenario connected to S4) and "Wasp Nest — The City State of Stoink." More or less concurrently, I am attempting to plug away at two new volumes for AD&D™ gaming. The next book of monsters will be the one to be released last (1984 possibly).

With plenty of labor and even more luck there will be an ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® expansion volume next year. It will be for both players and DMs, with several new character classes, new weapons, scores of new spells, new magic items, etc. What will follow here in the next few issues is a sampling of the material slated for inclusion in the expansion.

I have often wondered why no player or DM has asked me about what apprentice magic-users actually do. The very thought always conjures up visions of Mickey Mouse having troubles with brooms marching endlessly with buckets of water — Walt Disney really outdid himself when he made Fantasia! That aside, I have always reasoned that apprentice dweomer-crafters had to fulfill the dual role of menial and student, performing chores all day and then studying late into the night. After a certain point, an apprentice would begin to acquire sufficient magical acumen to employ minor magics — mainly to lighten his burden of drudgery but also to create some amusement at times. The petty spells gained by an apprentice magic-user are *cantrips*.

Previously, the acquisition of first-level spell ability subsumed that lesser magics would be ignored by the fledgling

magic-user. The stuff of base servitude and inferior status would be cast aside for the heady power of actual spells! However, as I worked on the list of cantrips which might be possible to apprentices, I was struck by the real usefulness of many of them. Why not allow the magic-user the option of retaining cantrips? Would it unbalance play if a number of cantrips could be substituted for a single first-level spell? A few days of additional work detailing the powers of cantrips and determining their possible effects gave the answer: Not only did the addition not adversely affect the game, the inclusion of cantrips made the play of low-level magic-users very much more interesting and challenging! The following regarding cantrips is from my AD&D™ expansion manuscript.

## CANTRIPS

Cantrips are merely 0-level magic-user spells, the spells learned and used by apprentices during their long, rigorous, and tedious training for the craft of magic-use. Most *cantrips* are simple little spells of no great effect, so when the individual becomes a journeyman (1st-level) magic-user, the knowledge and information pertaining to these small magics are discarded in favor of the more powerful spells then available. However, a magic-user may opt to remember up to four cantrips in place of one 1st-level spell. This assumes that the magic-user has, in fact, retained his or her book of *cantrips* — a tome as large as a good-sized book of higher-level spells.

The number and types of *cantrips* known and recorded is determined by random use of the tables given below. The exception is the table of *useful cantrips* — those which were employed to make apprenticeship less wearisome. An apprentice will have one *useful cantrip* for each point of intelligence, and is allowed free choice from the list of 20 offered.

All *cantrips* are 0 level, have a 1" range, a generally small area of effect, require only soft, simple verbal and somatic components, and are cast in a very short (1/10th to 1/2 segment) time. Only those which involve living creatures afford any saving throw. The common *cantrips* are:

### Useful

| No. Cantrips  | Reversed (2-8) | Legerdemain (2-5) |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 Chill       | Curdle         | Change            |
| 2 Clean       | Dirty          | Distract          |
| 3 Color       | Dusty          | Hide              |
| 4 Dampen      | Hairy          | Mute              |
| 5 Dry         | Knot           | Palm              |
| 6 Dust        | Ravel          | Present           |
| 7 Exterminate | Sour           |                   |
| 8 Flavor      | Spill          |                   |
| 9 Freshen     | Tangle         |                   |
| 10 Gather     | Tarnish        |                   |
| 11 Polish     | Untie          |                   |
| 12 Salt       | Wilt           |                   |
| 13 Shine      |                |                   |
| 14 Spice      |                |                   |
| 15 Sprout     |                |                   |
| 16 Stitch     |                |                   |
| 17 Sweeten    |                |                   |
| 18 Tie        |                |                   |
| 19 Warm       |                |                   |
| 20 Wrap       |                |                   |

### No. Person (2-8)

| No. Person (2-8) | Personal (2-8) | Haunting (2-5) |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 Belch          | Bee            | Creak          |
| 2 Blink          | Bluelight      | Footfall       |
| 3 Cough          | Bug            | Groan          |
| 4 Giggle         | Firefinger     | Moan           |
| 5 Nod            | Gnats          | Rattle         |
| 6 Scratch        | Mouse          | Tap            |
| 7 Sneeze         | Smokepuff      | Thump          |
| 8 Twitch         | Spider         | Whistle        |
| 9 Wink           | Tweek          |                |
| 10 Yawn          | Unlock         |                |

## CANTRIP EXPLANATIONS

## Useful Cantrips

**Chill** (Evocation)  
A of E: 1' cube  
CT: 1/2 segment

A cantrip of this nature allows the caster to cause liquid or solid material to become about 40° F. cooler than it was, subject to a minimum temperature of freezing. If the subject is living matter, the cantrip will be only half as effective and will not lower temperature more than 10° below normal for that creature. Verbal component is a soft whistling, somatic is a downward-thrust thumb.

**Clean** (Abjuration)  
A of E: 4 sq. yds.  
CT: 1/2 segment

This cantrip removes heavy soil, dirt, and like foreign objects from floors, walls, dishes, windows, etc. The subject surfaces are then spotless, but care must be taken in removal of pigments and the like, so usually only one type of material will be treated in a single application. Verbal component is a low outrush of air, somatic is a circular hand motion.

**Color** (Evocation)  
A of E: 1 cubic yd.  
CT: 1/2 segment

This brings color to an object. It can be used to restore faded hues or to tinge those already colored with a different hue. Thus, dull or faded fabric can be brightened, pigments restored, or even hair or skin changed to another color. The effect must be renewed every 30 days. Verbal component is a humming, somatic is a back-and-forth or wringing hand motion.

**Dampen**  
(Evocation)  
A of E: 1 cubic yd.  
CT: 1/2 segment

When a cantrip of this sort is cast, the subject area is permeated by a fog-like dampness which leaves all material within it damp to the touch. It is useful for many sorts of things. It is hard on parchment, and it similarly makes it and like substances hard to set afame. Verbal component is a low hooting or a hummed ditty, somatic is a hand gesture upwards with writhing fingers.

**Dry** (Abjuration)  
A of E: 1 cubic yd.  
CT: 1/2 segment

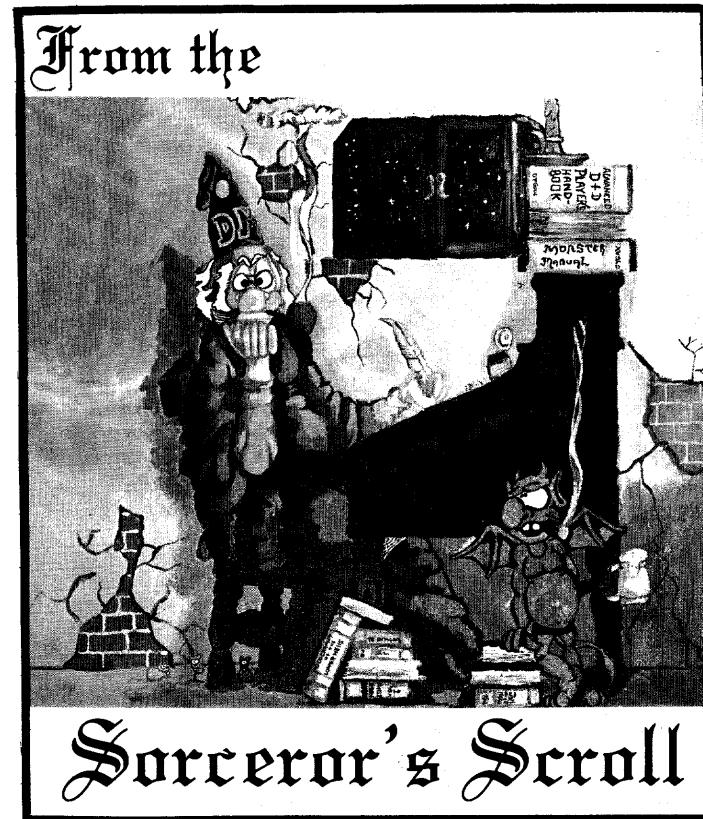
The cantrip removes dampness and excess moisture from materials within the subject areas. It is useful for cloth, herbs, and cleaning chores. Verbal component is similar to that of the *dampen* cantrip, and the somatic is a two-handed wringing motion.

**Dust** (Abjuration)  
A of E: 10' r.  
CT: 1/2 segment

This removes all fine dust and tiny grit particles from exposed surfaces such as floors, shelves, walls, etc. Material so removed is transported elsewhere, but new dust can accumulate, of course. Verbal component is a continuous in-drawing of breath, somatic is a back-and-forth hand motion.

**Exterminate**  
(Abjuration)  
A of E: One very  
small creature  
CT: 1/10 segment

When this cantrip is used, the caster may kill a small pest such as a fly, mouse, rat, beetle, or the like. It is useful for indoors and outdoor applications. If the subject is very small, an



## Sorceror's Scroll

area of up to 1/2 cubic foot can be rid of pests. The somatic gesture is a pointed finger, while the caster verbalizes a low "zzzt" sound.

**Flavor**  
(Enchantment)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

This cantrip enables the caster to give the subject a superior or better or different flavor. Thus, much can be made to taste as if it were lobster bisque, but the dweomer will not actually affect the quality or wholesomeness of the subject. Spoiled food remains spoiled; a poisoned drink would still be deadly. The verbal component is a muttered lip-smacking sound; the somatic gesture is a shaking motion.

**Freshen**  
(Enchantment)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

By means of this cantrip the caster brings new life or freshness to the object desired. The magic applies to food and drink items such as milk, beer, meat, and raw vegetables. It also works with cut vegetables, flowers, herbs, etc. Although it will remove a slight taint of spoilage, restore drooping flowers, and so on, it lasts for but an hour. The subject must be of relatively small size, i.e. a small cask of liquid, a sheep, a bushel of vegetables, etc. Verbal component is an "mmmmmm" sound, while the hand makes a mystic symbol with thumb and forefinger forming a circle and the other fingers upright and apart.

**Gather** (Alteration)  
A of E: 1 sq. yd.  
CT: 1/6 segment

This cantrip enables the caster to neatly gather numerous small objects into a stack or pile. For instance, if nails, nuts, coins, papers, or like objects were spilled, the magic would

bring them together. It can be used selectively, for instance to separate one type of material from another, but only the selected type would be gathered neatly. The caster verbalizes the type of material to be gathered while making a gathering motion.

**Polish** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: ½ segment

When this cantrip is employed, the caster, magically smooths and brings a luster to materials such as wood, metal, stone, leather, or ceramic. Naturally, the desired object must be relatively clean in order for the cantrip to be effective. The object affected must be of reasonable size — a floor of up to 1,000 square feet, an armoire, etc. It works better on smaller objects, of course, such as boots, mirrors, crystal containers, etc. The caster hums a ditty while making a buffing motion.

**Salt** (*Evocation*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/6 segment

This causes a sprinkling of fine salt to magically appear and descend upon the desired object — a stew, some troublesome weed patch, or a barrel full of stock fish to be preserved. The object must be a reasonable size — up to perhaps 4 square yards in area or about 30 gal. liquid volume. Care must be taken to avoid over-salting if the object involved is smaller, and if the object is larger, it will not receive much salt. Verbal component is a labial smacking, while the hand makes a sprinkling motion.

**Shine** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: ½ segment

Similar to the *polish* cantrip above, this magic allows the caster to remove tarnish, rust, corrosion, and like substances from the desired object. This cantrip brings about a mirror-bright shine to objects capable of such, causing their surfaces to be smooth and unmarred. A piece of jewelry, for instance, would be made more attractive, and even its gems better (+1 on die rolls). A single object up to about 1 cubic yard in volume can be treated by this cantrip. Verbal and somatic components are similar to *polish*.

**Spice** (*Evocation*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: ½ segment

Unlike the flavor cantrip, this magic actually brings a particular spice to the object food or drink. Thus, ginger, pepper, and like spices can be brought to add zest (or disguise). Herbs like bay leaf, garlic, parsley, etc. can likewise be evoked by this. The quantity is sufficient to spice food or drink for about a dozen people. The spice (or herb) appears over the object vessel as a fine powder or flake, falls upon it, and adds its substance to the dish or drink. A ditty is hummed while the hand makes a crumbling and sprinkling motion.

**Sprout** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: 1 cubic yd.  
CT: ½ segment

By means of this cantrip the caster causes acceleration in the growth of plants, particularly with respect to the germination of plant seeds. Upon casting, the cantrip will cause seeds to shoot forth tiny sprouts, buds to

flower, etc. Fruits and vegetables can be caused to ripen (or actually go past ripening to spoilage) by this cantrip. A susurrant sound is verbalized while the caster's hand makes hoeing motions.

**Stitch** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: Special  
CT: ½ segment

This cantrip magically sews seams in cloth or leather. It will make new ones or repair old work. About 20 yards of cloth can be thus stitched, but only about 2 yards of leather. The seam thus created is neither stronger nor weaker than a seam done without magic. Usually a brief rhyme is recited as the hand makes a sewing motion.

**Sweeten**  
(*Evocation*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: ½ segment

This cantrip is the same as a *spice* cantrip, except that the result is the evocation of a sweetener — sugar, honey, or even a syrup. Components are a buzzing sound and a stirring motion.

**Tie** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: ½ segment

By means of this cantrip the caster can magically cause the object — thread, string, cord, rope, or even cable — to tightly knot itself to either its other end or an end of a similar object, within 1' of it. The resulting knot will be a normal one such as a square knot, half-hitch, running bowline, or whatever the caster desires. The caster verbalizes the knot name desired while holding up three fingers.

**Warm** (*Evocation*)  
A of E: 1' cube  
CT: ½ segment

This cantrip is the same as *chill*, except that the magic brings a warming of the liquid or solid. The temperature will rise at most about 40° F. The cantrip will never cause living creatures to become warmer than their normal body temperature. Components are an "aah" sound while the hands are rubbed briskly together.

**Wrap** (*Alteration*)  
A of E: 1 cubic yd.  
CT: ½ segment

When a wrap cantrip is employed, the caster creates a strong and sturdy wrapping around the subject desired — a bit of herbs, a heap of flour, a bundle of cloth, etc. The material of the cantrip is of a suitable type and thickness for the item(s) to be wrapped. Thus, a few ounces of fine powder will be contained in a waxy tissue, gem stones in a felt-like envelope, meal in cloth, and so forth. The wrapping can be opened normally, but the caster can just as easily order it to open, so the cantrip is often used to enfold the material components of a spell. The caster verbalizes a general class of wrapping desired while making folding motions with his hands.

**Reversed Cantrips**

**Curdle**  
(*Enchantment*)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/6 segment

This cantrip is broader in effect than its name, for it affects many food and drink items. The magic curdles milk and hastens spoilage or wilting. It has a permanent effect on the object. It is otherwise similar to *freshen*. The caster verbalizes a retching sound while pointing the thumb downward.

**Dirty** (Evocation)  
A of E: 4 sq. yds.  
CT: 1/6 segment

The opposite of *clean* cantrip, this lets casters soil, spot, and sully walls, floors, dishes, garments, etc. Verbal component is a spitting sound, made while shuffling and stamping the feet.

**Dusty** (Evocation)  
A of E: 10' r.  
CT: 1/6 segment

By means of this cantrip the caster causes a film of dust and grime to settle upon all exposed surfaces within the cantrip area of effect. Verbal component is a low humming, while the hands make shaking motions.

**Hairy** (Alteration)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/10 segment

While this cantrip is not actually one of the standard "useful" ones which apprentices reverse for mischievousness, it is one which is generally used for no good purpose. It causes hair, fur, or hair-like growth to thicken and lengthen. Thus, a head of hair, a peach, a beard, a cat, or whatever could be affected. The growth will cause the subject material to increase from 2-12 inches in length. The subject material must be trimmed or cut to remove the cantrip's effect. This cantrip can be reversed to shorten growth or effectively shave, but as the effect on short material (growth under 1 inch in length) is complete absence of growth for 2-12 days, it is not often used. The caster verbalizes snicking sounds while making massaging motions for growth, or scissoring motions for removal.

**Knot** (Alteration)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

This cantrip is a permutation of the *tie*. It causes the thread, string, cord, or rope to knot itself in such a manner as to be very difficult to untie, and from 2-8 rounds, minus dexterity bonus for reaction of the individual untying the *knot*, to undo. It works even on material already affected by a *tie* spell. The caster verbalizes a low "zissing" sound while moving the arm forward with strong wrist motion.

**Ravel** (Alteration)  
A of E: Special  
CT: 1/10 segment

This cantrip is the reverse of a *stitch*. It will work only if there is a loose or broken thread in the seam or fabric to be affected, except for material magically stitched by the appropriate cantrip. When the latter sort of seam or material is involved, the *ravel* cantrip will always work, except in the case where the subject is otherwise magical, i.e. a *bag of holding*, a *cloak of protection*, *boots of elvenkind*, etc. The name of the cantrip is verbalized while the fingers make a plucking motion.

**Sour** (Evocation)  
A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

When this cantrip is employed, the caster causes the subject food or drink to take on a sour taste, not unlike vinegar of the appropriate sort. While it is typically used to spoil wine, beer, or some pastry, the *sour* cantrip can be used to useful purpose. The magic actually causes about a pint (maximum) of vinegar to appear over the subject.

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This can be an empty container in which such liquid is desired. The caster purses the lips and makes a whooshing sound while clenching the hand.

**Spill***(Alteration)*

A of E: 1 container  
CT: 1/6 segment

The opposite of a *gather* cantrip, this enables the caster to cause the contents of a container to spill out. The object container is actually tipped by the cantrip, and as it is not powerful, containers of more than about gallon size, or magical ones, will not be affected by the cantrip. Solids and/or liquids within the object container will spill out, providing the container is not securely closed or capped. The caster verbalizes an "oh-oh" sound while making an abrupt hand motion.

**Tangle** *(Alteration)*

A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/6 segment

A permutation of the *tie* cantrip, this magic allows the caster to cause fine material such as thread, hair, small grass, and the like to become twisted and entwined in a tangle. It will not work on heavy material such as rope. Untangling subject material will take 3-12 rounds, unless it is roughly done — and the material is broken and snapped in the process, torn loose, etc. The cantrip will tangle mixed materials such as grass and string, hair and threads, and so forth. A buzzing is verbalized while the finger makes a stirring motion.

**Tarnish***(Alteration)*

A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

The reverse of a *shine* cantrip, this causes a covering of rust, corrosion, verdigris, or the like to cover an object normally subject to such tarnishing.

**Untie** *(Alteration)*

A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/3 segment

The object must be of about 1 cubic yard or less in volume. Verbal component is a spitting sound, while the hand makes a sprinkling motion.

This permutation of a *tie* cantrip is simply the reverse of the magic. The caster selects an object — thread, string, cord, etc. — which is knotted or tied. The cantrip removes the *knot* or tying. Note that the *untie* cantrip will cause a *tangle* to be nullified. The cantrip will not remove both a *knot* and a normal tying (normal knot or one caused by a *tie* cantrip), but it will cause the former to disappear so that only a normal tying remains. Somatic and verbal components vary according to desired result. In general, a popping sound is made while the hands are pulled apart — either as if a knot were being untied or a cord snapped.

**Wilt***(Enchantment)*

A of E: 1 object  
CT: 1/2 segment

A reverse of the *freshen* cantrip which affects only vegetable material — whether growing or picked. Thus, a plant can be made to wilt (or possibly wither if it is not very healthy) or a bunch of cut flowers sag and droop. Verbal component is a descending hum, while the forefinger is slowly curled from an upright position.

Sorry, Gentle Readers, but that's all there is room for in this issue. Next month we will pick up where we left off and finish all of the explanations, as well as give a brief note on casting cantrips. Until then....

## Advanced Illusion and Philosopher's Stone

by Gary Gygax

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It seems that TSR gets the cart in advance of the horse fairly often. Thanks to the kind offices of DRAGON™ Magazine, we don't have to keep everyone in suspense for months because of premature actions. I refer specifically to the mention of an illusionist spell, *advanced illusion*, in the FIEND FOLIO™ Cyclopedia and to the mention of the magic item, *philosopher's stone*. Here is the information you need to handle both items. Just to keep our Gentle Readers well informed, they will eventually appear in a tome of material expanding ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ games that should be ready in 1983.

### Advanced Illusion (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 5

Range: 6" +1"/level

Duration: 1 round/level

Area of Effect: 4 sq." +1 sq."/level

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 5 segments

Saving Throw: Special

**Explanation/Description:** This spell is essentially a *spectra/ forces* spell that operates through a program (similar to a *programmed illusion* spell) the caster determines. Thus, the illusionist must concentrate on the spell for longer than 5 segments after casting it, as the program has then been started and will continue. The illusion has visual, full audial, olfactory, and thermal components. If any viewer actively disbelieves the dweomer, he, she, or it gains a saving throw versus magic. If any viewer successfully disbelieves, and communicates this fact to other viewers able to comprehend the communication, each such viewer gains a saving throw versus magic with a +4 bonus. The material components for this spell are a bit of fleece and several grains of sand.

**Philosopher's Stone:** This rare and magical object appears to be an ordinary, rather blackish and sooty piece of rock. It radiates a faint dweomer. If broken open, a geode-like cavity will be discovered. The interior of this cav-

ity is lined with a quicksilver that enables the transmutation of the base metals iron and lead into silver and gold. Either an alchemist or a magic-user will be required to effect such transmutation, however. From 50 to 500 pounds of iron can be made into silver, or from 10 to 100 pounds of lead can be turned into gold from a single *philosopher's stone*. Better still, two additional substances are possible within such a stone. The first is a greenish, crystalline salt which will allow the manufacture of from 1 to 4 *potions of longevity* and has a 75% probability of occurring within the stone. The second is a pure white powder which, when mixed with a *potion of longevity*, can actually restore life to a dead human (or even a demihuman) if administered internally within one week of his or her demise. (Cf. *raise dead* spell.) There is a 25% chance the white powder is present.

X.P. Value: 1,000

G.P. Sale Value: 10,000 (payable only for an unopened stone)

# GIANTS IN THE EARTH

## CLASSIC HEROES FROM FICTION & LITERATURE

Poul Anderson's  
SIR ROGER DE TOURNEVILLE

### 10th-level fighter

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*  
HIT POINTS: 91  
ARMOR CLASS: 0  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+3)  
HIT BONUS: +1  
MOVE: 6"/15"  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
STRENGTH: 18/12  
INTELLIGENCE: 15  
WISDOM: 13  
DEXTERITY: 17  
CONSTITUTION: 16  
CHARISMA: 15

Sir Roger de Tourneville was a baron in England in the year 1345 who was gathering an army at the village of Ansby to aid King Edward III's war against France. Unexpectedly, Ansby was also selected as the landing site of an invasion force of the Wersgorix, a blue-skinned alien race bent on conquering Earth and adding it to the growing number of subject planets in their empire. A 2,000-foot-long starship landed near the village and was quickly surrounded by the English warriors, who believed it to be sent from either heaven or hell. The Wersgorix tried to frighten the humans with their advanced weapons, but this proved a mistake. The Englishmen attacked in a berserk fury with hand-to-hand weapons and bows, and decimated the ship's crew, which had never fought in close combat before and had never expected to fight the humans anyway.

When Sir Roger and his men gained control of the starship (though he had very little idea of what it was or what it did), Sir Roger proposed that the ship be used against the French and eventually against the Moslems to recover the Holy Land. His plan was enthusiastically received by nearly all the townsfolk, and 2,000 people, with all their worldly possessions and livestock, boarded the vessel for the trip. However, a captured alien who had showed Sir Roger and others how to work the ship and its weapons tricked them into making a voyage to the

nearest colony world of the Wersgorix instead of to France, hoping the troublesome English would meet their match and be done with.

Such was not to be. Sir Roger was quick to grasp the essentials of the alien technology, and his knowledge of medieval combat and his knack for trickery saved the ship's company many times. He led cavalry charges against armed alien forces that succeeded because of the very unexpectedness of the assault and his own leadership.

Even when it became apparent that none of the Englishmen would ever return to Earth, he refused to admit defeat.



He overran a local starport, successfully defending it from alien infantry and armored attacks, and improvised new strategies as he went along. At one point his forces launched nuclear weapons from trebuchets, and fought off anti-gravity assault boats with longbows and ballistae. The Wersgorix, thoroughly unfamiliar with such tactics and continually underestimating the English and Sir Roger, continued to withdraw. With captured alien weaponry Sir Roger laid siege to the main starport, destroyed all other alien estates on the world, and eventually conquered the planet.

In time, Sir Roger led expeditions on

captured starships to other worlds, battling the Wersgorix wherever he found them and allying his forces with those of other civilizations who hated the Wersgorix as well. Sir Roger does not dare cease his war with the aliens, since he knows if he did so the Wersgorix would destroy the humans and try to seek out the lost Earth to destroy or enslave it as well.

Sir Roger is a typical, lusty, battle-hungry Englishman whose personal manners do not quite reach the ideals of chivalry or of his wife, Lady Catharine. He is grey-eyed, has blond hair that he keeps shaved on the sides, and maintains a confident and happy appearance even when faced with tremendous adversity. If he perceives he is dealing with powerful opponents, he is skilled at bluffing and never reveals his fear. He tends to interpret sophisticated technology in terms of magic and other unholy forces, being the medieval Christian that he is. He still holds Edward III to be his king, though he has no idea where Earth is any more, and he plans to add all the worlds he's conquered to the holdings of England when he returns, after the final triumph over the Wersgorix.

If encountered in an AD&D™ universe, it is likely that Sir Roger has landed his ship somewhere nearby and is out with his men searching for aliens to fight. He wears plate mail and carries a longsword and lance when astride his black heavy warhorse. He may also possess various weapons of advanced technology; the Mark V Blaster and several Energy Grenades from the GAMMA WORLD™ game are suggested. His men may also have a variety of advanced and archaic weapons, though Sir Roger and his forces prefer good old-fashioned hand-to-hand melee. There is a 50% chance when Sir Roger is outside the ship that he will be accompanied by Lady Catharine (5th-level fighter) and by Brother Parvus, a medieval cleric (6th level) of small stature. Whether he finds any aliens in the AD&D world is up to the DM.

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*Written by Roger E. Moore*

L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt's  
HAROLD SHEA

7th-level fighter with  
special spell abilities

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

HIT POINTS: 69

ARMOR CLASS: 1

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type

HIT BONUS: *Nil*

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 10%

STRENGTH: 13

INTELLIGENCE: 18/70

WISDOM: 14

DEXTERITY: 17

CONSTITUTION: 17

CHARISMA: 15

Harold Shea served for many years as a staff psychologist at the Garaden Institute somewhere in Ohio. Although reasonably competent in this position, he felt unsatisfied and unfulfilled. Basically romantic in nature, he attempted to compensate for his unexciting life by taking on rather affected roles and dress, much to the amusement of his friends and co-workers.

Finally, his chance to escape everyday life came when an elder scientist, Reed Chalmers, developed the theory of inter-universal apportion based on mathematical logic. Harold wasted no time putting the theory into practice, and succeeded in dumping himself into the center of Norse mythology. Since that time, he has had several adventures in the worlds of myth and fantasy. As such, his arrival into any AD&D™ universe could be either through choice or accident.

Harold Shea is a young man, slightly taller and thinner than normal, with a dark complexion and hair. There is a 70% chance that when encountered he will be dressed in clothes fitting to the world he is in; otherwise, his dress will be that of a 20th century businessman or psychologist — suit and tie. If he is armed, he will



carry a straight-bladed epee in an improvised scabbard (treat as a short sword for "to hit" and damage). He will not wear armor.

Harold is an adequate fighter, though somewhat mediocre by heroic standards. His principal skill in fighting comes from his acquaintance with fencing in the "real" world. Due to his limited practice and training, Harold will be unfamiliar with most weapons and will suffer a -5 penalty when attempting to use anything but a sword, dagger, or crossbow.

Harold Shea's greatest power is his special magic ability. When in a magical universe, he can attempt to create any effect he desires, through the application of mathematical laws concerning magic. When he desires to cast a spell, he must first describe the desired effect and then compose a poem about the spell. The poem must make a comparison between the desired effect of the spell and some thing or event that is somehow similar to it. The poem must be at least 4 lines long with the first line rhyming with the third and the second with the fourth. Secondly, Harold must also have something to use as a material component. Neither the spell nor the material component have to be among those things found in the AD&D rules. The DM may choose to use other poetic forms, since Harold was not always consistent in the type of poem used.

Once all the requirements have been met, the success of the casting may be measured. The three factors to consider are the exact wording of the poem (in much the same way one would consider a wish), the quality of the poem, and the type and quality of material component used. The outcome of the spell may range from more than the caster intended to some entirely unexpected effect.

Since the system described above can be too difficult or time-consuming for many DMs to use, an alternative method would be to allow Harold Shea a never-ending use of *limited wish*. However, there would be a 40% chance that the spell would backfire, regardless of wording, and the normal guidelines for wording wishes would still apply. Any backfires will not kill or directly harm Harold Shea, but may place him in a very difficult position.

There is an 80% chance that Harold will be accompanied by his wife Bellephebe, a 12th-level ranger, and a 40% chance that Reed Chalmers will be with him (treat him as a sage skilled in mathematics and metaphysics). If Harold's wife is not with him, he will be searching for her, and may ask the party to aid him.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *The Complete Enchanter*, *Wall of Serpents* (Ballantine Books), *The Green Magician* (The Dragon, #15-16); all by de Camp and Pratt.

Written by David Cook

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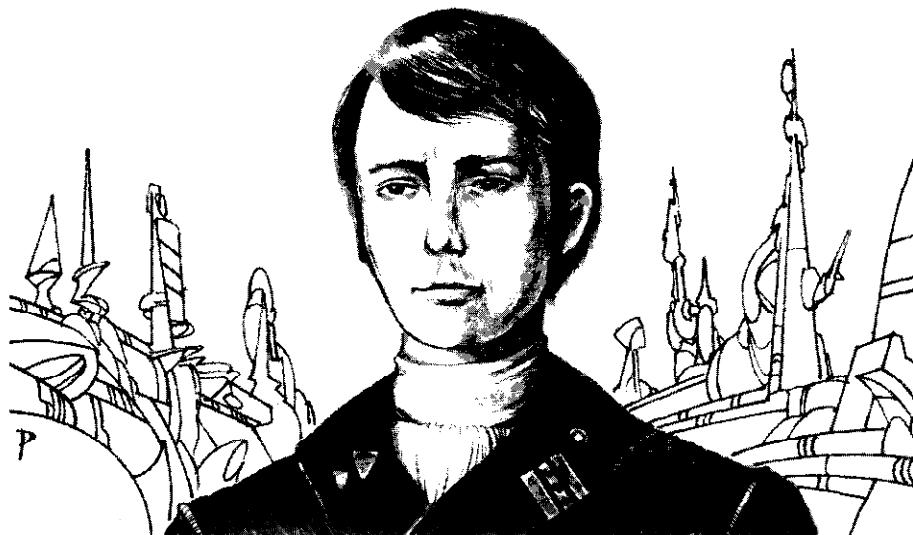
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Alexei Panshin's  
**ANTHONY VILLIERS**

**10th-level ranger / 7th-level thief**

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

HIT POINTS: 42

ARMOR CLASS: 6

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type

HIT BONUS: Nil

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

STRENGTH: 15

INTELLIGENCE: 17

WISDOM: 16

DEXTERITY: 18

CONSTITUTION: 14

CHARISMA: 17

Anthony Villiers, a remittance man, became a wanderer only partly against his wishes. He is, in fact, the Viscount Charteris, paid regularly by his father to travel. It is Villiers's father who to a great extent determines to which of the millions of worlds in the Nashuite Empire he will travel, by including instructions for reaching the destination of the next payment in each communication to his son. To Villiers, interstellar travel is a fringe benefit of his position; he treats it as both a game and a pastime.

Under occasional surveillance by Empire officials, he moves about steadily to keep them guessing. And, since he has a large number of casual and intimate acquaintances scattered about the universe, he enjoys short visits.

Among his closer human friends is a man travelling under the name "Fred," whose situation is similar to that of Villiers, since he is the son of the Emperor. Fred, like Villiers, is a Chief in the Big Beavers (an organization whose ideal is to enter a wilderness and create a semblance of civilization from it), and is roughly equivalent to a 12th-level ranger, although he lacks the usual spell-casting ability of that class.

Villiers is a fairly short, dashing man in his late twenties or early thirties. He dresses with little regard for current fashion even in his natural setting, and will appear quite outlandishly attired in any campaign. How he reaches the DM's campaign world is a matter for careful consideration — while Villiers is known to occasionally travel to planets deemed "closed" by the Empire, he is not foolhardy, and will be able to leave the planet quickly if danger is present. He thrives on confusion and intrigue, but exercises careful judgement.

He usually carries with him a Curdler, a gun- or wand-like weapon that kills through nervous shock (unless the victim successfully saves versus wands), after a period of *confusion*, as the spell, lasting for 1-6 turns. Although he is soft-spoken, charming, and self-assured even when treated badly, many take his attitude for arrogance. Villiers has many friends, but just as many enemies.

He is proficient in the use of both the Curdler and a second unique weapon, the Tingler. This device, reserved largely for duelling, appears to be a rod or a cane. However, it destroys nerves on contact, so that a blow will cause 2-8 hit points of damage to any creature having a nervous system. The loss is permanent and can only be counteracted by a *Regenerate*, *Limited Wish*, or *Wish* spell.

Villiers will not use his thieving skills to directly increase his wealth. He is especially good at Reading Languages, Hiding in Shadows, Moving Silently, and Opening Locks (all at +5%), and less skilled than normal (-5%) in the other abilities.

Villiers travels everywhere with Torve the Trog. Trogs, distinctly different from troglodytes as depicted in the AD&D™ rules, have these characteristics:

FREQUENCY: Very rare

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 9

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 5+5

% IN LAIR: Nil

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: Special

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Charming

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Average to high

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: M

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense modes: Nil

As a race, trogs are confined to their own planets, having in the past nearly defeated humans in an interstellar war, and are considered dangerous. Only about 50 individuals of the race are allowed to engage in interstellar travel.

Torve, a trog of high (13) intelligence with 36 hit points, is not one of these few — he travels on false papers, forged so well that discovery is nearly impossible (1% or 2% chance each time his papers are checked).

Among trogs, coloration is significant of profession. Peasants are gray or grayish olive, soldiers are white striped with black, and scholars are solid brown. Torve is predominantly brown, but has a white belly and faint black stripes on his back, meaning that he is unpredictable, but essentially harmless.

Rather, he is an artist. Much of Torve's time is spent composing various works of art, or *frobbis*, as he calls them. The actual production of one of these works of art sets up a series of resonant *thurbs*, which have a hypnotic, calming, and charming effect on some humans. A saving throw versus spells is required for a viewer or witness to one of Torve's art works to avoid being charmed.

Torve is usually quiet, and although he prefers to stay in the background, his unusual nature and appearance often bring him a great deal of attention. He speaks a broken version of the common tongue, in sharp contrast to the eloquent speech of Villiers. His penchant, if it can be said to be one, is for jellied white worms, the only meat he allows himself to eat. Meat is his natural diet, and anything else but fruit rinds and some starches would be undigestible to him.

He appears as a large, furry man-frog, his features tending more to the latter than to the former. Many humans find him charming and comforting.

When faced with a fight, Torve will retreat calmly if possible, but if cornered along with Villiers he can demonstrate his proficiency in the use of the Curdler or the Tingler.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** *Starwell, The Thurb Revolution*, and *Masque World*, all by Alexei Panshin (paperbacks, Ace Books).

*Written by Andrew Dewar*

## Clifford D. Simak's MARK CORNWALL

### 4th-level fighter with full sage abilities

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*

HIT POINTS: 27

ARMOR CLASS: 9

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+3) or more

HIT BONUS: +2 or more

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

STRENGTH: 16

INTELLIGENCE: 18/74

WISDOM: 16

DEXTERITY: 14

CONSTITUTION: 12

CHARISMA: 15

Mark Cornwall originally lived in a country of humans some distance from an enchanted land called "the Wasteland," where nearly all the demi-humans, humanoids, and assorted monsters of the world lived. Mark was a student at Wyalusing University when he one day came across an ancient manuscript that told of an even more ancient library hidden in the remote Wasteland. He stole the paper and set out for the Wasteland, but the theft was detected, and forces of the Inquisition (a distinctly evil branch of an otherwise lawful good church) followed him, to also find (and destroy) the library.

Mark, who sought only to gain further knowledge from the library, accumulated a number of strange friends on his quest into the Wastelands. He was joined by a gnome smith, an elven Bowman and his pet raccoon, a small and furry being of the People of the Marsh, a runaway serving girl, a robot, and a rafter goblin named Oliver. Together they were able to use their strengths to overcome the terrors of the Wasteland, which easily destroyed the army of the Inquisition.

When he finally arrived at the secret library, Mark discovered the caretaker of the library was a being from another universe. The alien was involved in a project to eventually merge the powers and good points of three separate universes: Mark's magical world, a technological world (modern-day Earth), and a peaceful, humanistic world from which the serving-girl's parents had come. With some reluctance, Mark has joined in this undertaking, though he does not like or trust anything technological in nature; indeed, Mark Cornwall does not truly believe in technology, preferring the familiar world of magic instead.

Mark Cornwall is a young man, probably in his late twenties or early thirties, who wears only normal clothing and no armor but a shield. His extensive studies at the University and at the Wasteland library have made him the equal of a sage in the major field of Humankind, with special categories of History, Lan-



guages, and Legends & Folklore. He has two minor fields, Demi-Humankind and Humanoids & Giantkind. Mark can speak common, Latin, and the caveman tongue, and he has a 40% chance to read any other language employed by humans. Though most humans of Mark's home country do not like non-humans, Mark is quite open and friendly toward all but the evil sorts. He thinks of himself as a scholar, not a fighting man.

Mark owns a magical sword, given to him by his gnome friend, with extraordinary powers. It is a +2 weapon, emitting a soft light equal in intensity to a torch; against giantkind or evil humanoids it becomes +4 to hit and does double damage plus a bonus of 4 extra points of damage. The longsword may be thrown at an opponent, with the same range limits as a javelin, will return to the caster (whether it hits or not) at the end of the round in which it was thrown, and can be automatically grasped at that time.

Most of Mark's fellow adventurers departed upon completion of the quest to find the library, but two remained with him. The serving-girl, Mary, is now his wife; though she seems to have no exceptional powers (being in effect a zero-level person with 6 hit points and AC 10), she cannot be attacked by any being at all because of the effects of her peaceful upbringing. She will not attack any being, either, even if charmed. She is a close friend of a large number of pixies, brownies, sprites, and the like who live at the library.

Oliver, the rafter goblin, is 50% likely to be present if Mark Cornwall is encoun-

tered. Oliver stands 3' tall, and wears tattered and faded clothes of brown, red, and green. He has bare, hairy feet (like a halfling's, though he is not one). Oliver has a thin and wizened appearance and large ears, and a small peaked cap sits on his head. His alignment is neutral, with good tendencies; he has 15 hit points (2 hit dice), armor class 9, and ability scores of strength 8, intelligence 17, wisdom 14, dexterity 16, constitution 11, and charisma 13. Oliver has all of the abilities of a 10th-level thief and a 4th-level magic-user (DM's choice of spells).

From living in several large libraries during his life (primarily so he could play tricks on the students), Oliver has gained some sage-like powers and knowledge, though he has no major or minor fields (treat all questions asked of him as being "Out of Fields" on the chart on p. 32 of the DMG). Forgery is Oliver's forte, and he can copy anyone's handwriting.

Mark, Mary, and Oliver, though they spend most of their time at the library in the Wasteland, would not be against the idea of adventuring to uncover the knowledge of other lands and worlds. The Caretaker conceivably has the power to send them to other planes and universes if they desire. It is likely that if they did so, they would again gather an unlikely assortment of traveling companions of any conceivable race; perhaps they would join or be joined by various AD&D™ characters as well.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Enchanted Pilgrim* (paperback, Berkley, Medallion Books) by Clifford D. Simak.

Written by Roger E. Moore

**Clifford D. Simak's  
SNIVELEY**

**3rd-level gnome fighter,  
with special spell abilities**

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful good with neutral tendencies

**HIT POINTS:** 21

**ARMOR CLASS:** 6

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** By weapon type

**HIT BONUS:** Nil

**MOVE:** 6"

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil

**STRENGTH:** 15

**INTELLIGENCE:** 15

**WISDOM:** 13

**DEXTERITY:** 16

**CONSTITUTION:** 15

**CHARISMA:** 14

Sniveley is a gnomish smith and weapons maker of considerable repute. His home is a large gnome colony in the hills near the Wasteland, a large area inhabited only by non-human creatures. One day he was asked to supply a human scholar with a sword he could use to protect himself on a journey into the Wasteland. Sniveley gave over a powerful magical blade he had fashioned himself; it pleased him, because of his pride in his work, to test the weapon against the chaotic powers of the Wasteland's inhabitants. Eventually, however, Sniveley himself felt a sense of responsibility for the man, named Mark Cornwall. He took off on his own after Mark and the other adventurers in his party, and joined them; his knowledge of the customs of non-humans proved to be of critical importance to the group's survival. When Mark's quest into the Wasteland was completed, Sniveley returned to his home to continue his smithing work. There he still makes magic weapons on occasion.

Sniveley is very business-oriented, but has no greed. He prefers other modes of payment rather than money for the purchase of a non-magical weapon or item he has made, and his prices are exceptionally low. He cannot read or write, but the gnomes of his colony developed an accurate ledger system using symbols that Sniveley employs frequently.

Sniveley's people are, like him, a combination of miners, smiths, and traders. The colony's history and other facts about non-human cultures are transmitted verbally, which makes the accuracy of older information suspect. Nonetheless, Sniveley has committed to memory an extraordinary amount of information on non-humans, and can answer most questions about them with reasonable accuracy, if he so chooses.

Though Sniveley distrusts most humans (the society of humans near his colony is generally unfriendly to all non-humans), he has learned to trust those few of lawful good nature who also like

non-humans. He tends to be a pessimist about the eventual outcome of any undertaking (except his own work), but if he gives his word to help in a situation, he will never go back on it.

Sniveley may be approached as to the possibility of obtaining a 'magical weapon, but he will only speak to those who are lawful good about this. If he becomes convinced that the making of a magical weapon is for an extremely good cause, and if he feels the mission would be a worthy test of his weapon-making skills, he will give the weapon freely to the asker, accepting no payment. The way in which he manufactures such weapons is different from the method described in the AD&D™ rules; Sniveley is able to memorize and cast the spells *Enchant An Item* and *Enchanted Weapon* in his workshop on a weapon of exceptional quality he has already made. He can also cause the dweomers placed upon the weapon to become permanent with careful work. This process may take up to a year or more due to the care with which the weapon must be made and the spells woven into it.

Sniveley's magical weapons are of var-

ied and unpredictable power; most seem to develop latent special abilities of a helpful nature, though not even Sniveley can guess what powers might appear. Should a player character manage to obtain such a weapon, it will be usable only by good or neutral persons. Its powers should be secretly determined by the Dungeon Master, and are likely to be tailored to fit the quest the player character desired the weapon for. Sniveley is 75% likely to join the character on the quest as well, out of a sense of responsibility for that person's well-being.

On an adventure, Sniveley is not likely to wear any armor heavier than leather, and will use non-magical weapons like hand axes, hammers, daggers, or short swords if entering human territory. In non-human territory, Sniveley will be likely to carry no weapons at all, preferring to throw rocks at opponents if combat is necessary (1-2 damage, 30-foot range), and relying on his knowledge of local customs to get him safely through.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** *Enchanted Pilgrimage* (paperback, Berkley Medallion Books) by Clifford D. Simak.

*Written by Roger E. Moore*

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# GYPSIES

## A curse or a blessing — or both!

A brightly painted caravan rolling along an unending road: gypsies. A dark-eyed lady with a tambourine, whirling round the campfire to a wail of violins: gypsies. A crone hunched over a crystal ball: "Cross my palm with silver, dearie, and see what the future holds in store." The very stuff of legend: mysterious, romantic, fascinating gypsies. Welcome them to your AD&D™ campaign. But, who are the real-life gypsies? Where do they come from?

No one is sure exactly when they came to Europe, but they may have arrived in the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century. After the fall of Byzantium and the Turkish incursions into the Balkans, the gypsies began to migrate westward. Almost always viewed with a measure of suspicion and prejudice, they were often persecuted, and only occasionally tolerated, by those around them.

The origin and history of the gypsies prior to the sixth century is obscure. They claim to be of Egyptian origin, often referring to a homeland they call "Little Egypt." The name "gypsy" is a corruption of "Egyptian."

Linguistic experts, however, connect Romany, the language of the gypsies, with certain dialects found in northern India.

Their history is mostly to be deduced from their language. For example, the dialect of one tribe in Wales reveals words borrowed by their ancestors as they traveled through Persia, Armenia, Greece, several Balkan states, Germany, and France before arriving in England.

Greek is the strongest element in most European gypsy dialects, indicating a previous long stay in the Eastern empire. Gypsies call themselves the *Romany Rye* — the Roman people — though their



by

**A. D. Rogan**

language has no Roman (Latin) elements per se. This is another clue that they aligned themselves with Byzantium when it was Constantinople — "New Rome."

### The gypsies of legend

So much for the gypsies of history. It is the gypsies of legend that provide material for an AD&D game. They are always accounted skillful thieves. They have an uncanny way with animals, especially horses. And they are excellent — indeed, bewitching — musicians.

Natural bards, right? But wait! Gypsies are even better known as fortune tellers. They are credited with bringing playing cards to Europe by their use of the Tarot. So the crone with the crystal ball must be a magic-user. The legendary "Curse of the Gypsies" (more rarely used by game characters than the "Blessing") indicates some clerical powers as well.

Of course, no sane DM (if that isn't a contradiction in terms) will allow a non-player class of bards with magic-user and cleric spell ability. What must be done is to divide and limit these powers in accordance with traditional lore about the gypsies.

First, the skills that fit into the bard class are associated only with gypsy men and the fortune telling (magic-user spells) only with women. With one exception: All of the Romany folk — men, women, and children — can function as thieves.

Secondly, the powers of the gypsies are less than those of ordinary characters or NPCs of similar classes. Gypsies have no religion in the usual sense, and there are no clerics per se among them. Historically, they have conformed to the established religion of the area in which they were living. In a typical polytheistic AD&D scenario, this may not be particularly important. What is important is that the Romanies will hesitate to hassle with clerics.

Gypsies can acquire certain druid spells through the special intervention of Nature deities. In this respect, they resemble monsters with spell abilities. To further limit their powers as a class, assume all gypsies to be illiterate. Scrolls, spell books, and tomes are of no use to them, and their spells of all types are learned by word of mouth. They are good at languages, always having the common tongue and the Thieves' Cant as well as Romany, their own language. In addition to Romany, they use a sophisticated sign language. In order to learn either one, a character would first have to gain the confidence of a band of gypsies and then live with them for months or even years.

### Abilities and behavior

When rolling up an individual gypsy, adjust to give him or her a better-than-average charisma, dexterity, and consti-

tution. Gypsies are always described as sturdy, handsome people, and extremely charming; this ought to be reflected in their numbers. Though every Romany *chal* or *chi* does function as a thief, the experience level of each individual in a group need not necessarily be high. Some adults in a typical group will act primarily as fighters. Each DM may do as he or she pleases; I find it most sensible to treat these adults as fighters with some extra abilities, rather than as multi-classed characters. Gypsies are limited to the armor and weapons available to bards. They are not aggressive and will not attack unless provoked.

Gypsies are generally chaotic neutral; individuals may tend toward good or evil. They have a good deal of loyalty for each other and for the *Romany Rye* at large, but have little respect for *gorgios* (non-gypsies) and their institutions. As one striking example, they are liars; especially will they lie to *gorgios*. In the 1600's, the writer Cervantes quoted a gypsy as saying, "When we see fit, we make no difference between yes and no." This is partly self-protection, partly contempt for *gorgios*, and partly just for the hell of it — really chaotic. A European gypsy legend makes them out to be a little more lawful by explaining that Jesus was crucified with only three nails because a gypsy stole the fourth. Since Christ was thus spared extra suffering, the sins of theft and lying are forgiven the Romanies forever. Be that as it may, the DM may use their propensity to lie to great advantage.

Because the gypsies are such a lawless lot, paladins and other lawful good characters do not get along well with them. Thieves, bards, druids, and rangers are generally on friendly terms with the Romany folk, who will welcome a party with any of these classes represented in it. Gypsies will avoid conflict with clerics, especially those who represent the Established Church of the surrounding countryside. The gypsies' reaction to all other character classes is neutral.

Gypsies are human. Elves — particularly the wood elves, who are their great friends — are well disposed toward them. Halflings are fascinated by gypsies, but repelled by their rootless lifestyle; the two attitudes cancel out to neutrality. Dwarves and gnomes rather distrust them. Gypsies hate orcs and all the goblin races and will show antipathy toward a party with a half-orc character.

### Group encounters

A party of gypsies encountered in the wilderness may be as small as two or three individuals or as large as thirty adults. The larger the group, the greater the chance of finding spell casters among it. A typical wilderness encounter will be with a group of 10-15 adults and an equal number of children. A group this size will

travel in two or three small, two-wheeled carts and a larger (four-wheeled) caravan. When they pitch camp, they will set up small tents. They will have a string of saddle horses and mules, in addition to a number of draft animals equal to 1-1½ times the number of adults present. The gypsies are famous horse-traders and will be happy to sell or swap horses with adventurers. But let the buyer beware....

The Romany band is at an advantage in the forest. Gypsies move more quietly than an ordinary group of this size would be expected to and surprise on 1-4, as do nomads. They are friendly with forest "monsters" — dryads, fauns, treants, and the like — with whom they often exchange information.

The average Romany *chal* (man) even below bard level has special skill in handling and communicating with animals, especially horses and related beasts. A nobleman (gypsy with bard abilities) usually learns first those druid spells having to do with animals, like *animal friendship* or *locate animals*, to enhance and take further advantage of this ability with animals.

Gypsies are excellent trackers. When they travel, they leave little trace except their own distinctive trail, the *patteran*. George Borrow, an eccentric nineteenth-century English author who lived among the gypsies and wrote several books about them, described the *patteran* as an arrangement of grass, leaves, and/or twigs which the Romanies leave to guide their fellows. A ranger might recognize a *patteran*, but not get all the information from it that a gypsy would. Other characters would not notice it.

Rarely, gypsies may be encountered in gatherings of 50-100 adults, the numbers of children and animals increasing proportionately, encamped near towns or cities. Their camp then takes on the aspect of a fair. There may be a performing bear, jugglers, and fire-eaters. Remember that gypsies have a special rapport with animals, plus the use of the appropriate druid spells and excellent dexterity. Characters admiring these marvels run a grave risk of having their pockets picked. There will be other ways to separate a party from its loose change. How about the old shell game? Roll d6; on a roll of 1, the mark will spot the pea. Larcenous DMs can run more sophisticated scams. And no saving throws for intelligence, please: a smart person is said to be easier to con than a stupid one.

In a camp of this size, the chance of finding any spellcasting nobility — or even the King or Queen of the Gypsies — is much greater than in a smaller gathering. Concentrations of gypsies larger than this group are unlikely to ever occur. In standard AD&D Monster Manual terms, their frequency is *common* in woods and around settlements of any size, especially in the smaller groups;

uncommon in deep, uncharted wilderness and in vast unsettled areas; and very rare in dungeons or at sea.

### Gypsy fortune tellers

As mentioned before, gypsies acquire their spells in a slightly different way from that of the standard spellcasting classes, and the spells they learn depend upon sex. One hesitates to make this sort of distinction, but in the special case of NPCs and for purposes of game balance, perhaps it can be excused.

A Romany *chi* (woman) may function as a thief or, more rarely, as a fighter. A few women will take up the study of magic in order to tell fortunes or, in Romany, to *pen dukkerin*. When a gypsy woman commences her arcane career, she ceases to function as a thief or fighter. A beginner will chose those spells that will help her to fake an interesting seance, such as *unseen servant*, *ventriloquism*, and *magic mouth*. If she has psionic ability, she studies the appropriate disciplines of *animal telepathy*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *ESP*, *telepathy*, *telepathic projection*, and the like. Psionic ability is necessary if a woman is to become the Gypsy Queen, but not for lesser fortune tellers. As they rise in magic-user levels, fortune tellers learn the spells of *ESP*, *clairaudience*, and *clairvoyance*. At 4th level or above, they cast spells of *object reading*, *precognition*, and *telepathy*, which act as the psionic disciplines of the same names. These bear the same relation to these disciplines as the spell *ESP*, for instance, bears to psionic *ESP*.

A gypsy fortune teller at even the lowest level can tell *dukkerin*, using the accompanying chart (page 20). Roll dice to simulate a fortune told by palmistry or a crystal ball, or draw from a deck of ordinary playing cards to read a fortune in the cards. The DM may use the chart as presented, or substitute any information or misinformation he or she wishes to convey to a player. The good or ill effects suggested may not take place immediately. Instead, the DM should guide the adventure so as to give the character the chance to fulfill his or her *dukkerin*. On a roll of 00 or a draw of the ace of clubs, the gypsy *chi* will use any spells or artifacts at her command to answer the question truthfully. If she hasn't the requisite powers, she may very well retreat into mystical jargon — "The spirits work against me. The way is dark." — and so on, or may refer the character to a gypsy with greater powers.

Any Romany fortune teller has a ball made of crystal and a deck of cards as part of her stock in trade. A clear distinction should be made between these non-magical items and the similar high-level magic artifacts. The distinction need be clear only to the DM; if the gypsy is faking it, that is the players' lookout. Probably the only way to tell if a gypsy's spells

or artifacts are genuine would be for a character to cast *detect magic* — and any such attempt would be, ahem, discouraged by a Romany fighter's stout cudgel or something equally daunting.

The magical *Crystal ball* or *Deck of Many Things* described in the Dungeon Masters Guide or other similar items are the property of very high-level gypsy women and are greatly prized. One of the two aforementioned items, at least, will belong to the Queen of the Gypsies. When the fortune teller uses an artifact, spell, or psionic discipline for a client, the rules applying to this use are slightly different. Instead of working under the usual stipulation that a person or area to be scried must be known to the spell caster, the gypsy puts herself in rapport with her client or uses the client's latent psychic force by asking him or her to rub the crystal ball, shuffle and cut the deck, etc., and as a result can descry people, places, and things known to the client but not to herself.

Some say that the traditional "crossing her palm with silver" washes away the baneful magic, and this is why most fortune tellers insist on this ritual. The actual cost of a *dukkerin* is counted in gold pieces. A simple reading, such as the chart will give, costs as much as a good meal with wine in an inn. A full seance, calling for high-level spells and the use of magical artifacts, costs hundreds of gold pieces.

Fortune tellers are treated as standard magic-users, with the difference that they do not read at all and thus cannot use scrolls, spell books, or tomes, and cannot acquire "literate" spells like *read magic* and *legend lore*. They do not develop new spells or *enchant* items. After ninth level, they rise much more slowly than other magic-users. Add 100,000 points to the usual number of points needed to advance for each level, cumulative, from 10 to 12, and 200,000 points to the gap between each pair of levels thereafter.

(Example: The "distance" from 10th to 11th level is 475,000 points for gypsies instead of 375,000, so the gypsy M-U needs 850,000 points to make 11th level. The usual "distance" from 11th to 12th level is also 375,000, raised to 475,000 for gypsies. Added to the 850,000 points she needed for 11th level, this makes the gypsy's 12th-level requirement 1,325,000 points. Higher levels are achieved at 1,900,000; 2,475,000; 3,050,000; and so on, incrementing by 575,000 each time.)

There is but one Queen of the Gypsies at any time. She is not married, or even necessarily related, to the King. She is usually the highest-level magic-user among the Romany women. She must have psionics (a non-psionic can achieve high levels as a magic-user but cannot become Queen), and she must possess a magic item, relic, or artifact which re-

lates to her art of fortune telling (as noted above). If two or more women are of equal rank and qualifications for the position when the reigning Queen dies, they may duel for the office.

### Gypsy noblemen

Romany noblemen function as bards, but with some striking differences. When a gypsy reaches fifth level as a thief, he may become a fighter (reversing the usual process for a bard). Between fifth and eighth level, if he is found worthy (which is to say, if he has the minimum ability scores for a bard), he is ennobled and becomes the equivalent of a "bard under druidical tutelage." He receives his instruction from a nobleman of (bard) sixth level or above. He takes whatever noble title happens to suite his fancy — Lord, Count, Duke, etc. —with no reference implied or intended to level or the number of people in the band that he leads.

Gypsies have no titles or ranks among themselves, except for their King and Queen. When the gypsies of history began to move into Europe, their leaders found that a medieval ruler was not disposed to take a commoner seriously, so they adopted "meaningless" titles for themselves, and this pleasant fiction gave the gypsies a little political clout. "Noble" is a term to distinguish these bard-like gypsies from true bards, just as "fortune teller" distinguishes the women from true magic users.

Almost all the rules for bards apply to gypsy nobility, except that they are not literate in magic or any language, nor can they recognize any magic symbols. None of the "legend lore" material applies to them. Also, they have their own "bardic" instruments.

Gypsies, unlike true bards, play violins (or rebecs, depending on how much anachronism one can tolerate in one's campaign). Their playing alone acts as the "playing and singing of a bard" detailed in the Players Handbook for, of course, the gypsy cannot sing while fiddling (just try it!).

Instead of the bardic instruments in the DMG, gypsies have four magical violins. These violins are the exclusive property of the gypsies and are never found elsewhere in a campaign (as a crystal ball might be). A real bard would know something of their powers and would be wise enough not to attempt to play them.

Three are Lesser Viols, having the following properties when played by a nobleman of third level (bard) or above:

(A) Add +5% to the musician's charm percentage per level up to 12th; thus, 3rd level = +5%, 4th = +10%, and so on.

(B) Cast any three of the following spells once per day: *obscurement*, *snare*, *call woodland beings*, *summon equine beings* (q.v.), *control winds*, *weather summoning*, or *animal summoning*. The

DM decides which three spells are available for a particular Lesser Viol.

The Great Viol of Pharaoh is the property of the Gypsy King and the symbol of his office. When he plays it, he has all the powers of the Lesser Viols (choosing any of the listed spells, up to three a day). In addition, the Great Viol can cast, once a day, a dance spell similar in effect to the eighth level MU spell, *Otto's irresistible dance*. The musician need not touch his victim, but the victim must be in normal hearing range. A particular victim or victims may be selected from a group; all will hear the music, but only those designated by the violinist are affected by the magic. The gypsy may play for four rounds plus one round per level above 12th, up to a maximum duration of eight rounds. After six rounds of dancing, the victim is exhausted for 1-6 rounds. After dancing for a full eight rounds, the victim must sleep for 1-4 hours. Roll on the appropriate die and adjust for exceptionally high or low constitution. An exhausted creature cannot fight or cast spells.

There is only one King of the Gypsies at any time. He is a noble, usually of 12th level (bard) or above. When he dies, he is succeeded by the winner of a three-way duel between the noblemen possessing the three Lesser Viols. The victor becomes King for life. He takes the title of Pharaoh and becomes the owner of the

Great Viol. He then bestows his Lesser Viol on whichever noble he pleases.

#### Two new spells

There are two unique Romany spells. The first is *Summon Equine Beings*, a "druid" spell which may be cast by nobles of third level (bard) or better, or by any of the magic viols. The spell is similar to *call woodland beings* but brings to the aid of the gypsies one type of the following equine or quasi-equine beings:

- 4-16 ponies, burros, or donkeys
- 4-16 horses or mules
- 4-8 centaurs
- 1-4 hippocrits/pegasi/hippocampi
- 1-2 unicorns

The likelihood of attracting hippocampi is extremely rare, but if the spell is cast on the seashore or in a boat, they have as good a chance of being affected as any other equine being.

The number of beings summoned is doubled when the spell is cast by the Great Viol of Pharaoh. All wild equine beings save at -5; domestic horses, mules, ponies, etc., at -4; warhorses and other trained steeds (pegasi, etc.) at -1. A paladin's warhorse saves normally. Gypsies are always on good terms with any creatures summoned, so no loyalty check applies.

The other spell exclusive to gypsies, *Curse (Blessing) of the Gypsies*, is avail-

able to any spell caster — magic-user (female) or bard (male) — of fifth level or higher. This spell is very rarely used, and usually in response to a character's action toward a band of gypsies rather than toward an individual. Saving throws vs. magic apply, the caster must touch the recipient, and the spell requires six segments to cast. The curse is spoken in the Romany language and translates as: "Horsefold will hate you; bad luck will follow you; the Romany mark is placed on you!" The effects are as follows:

(A) The victim emits a peculiar odor, repellent to all equine or quasi-equine beings (listed in spell description). Riding horses, etc. refuse to carry the cursed character on percentile dice rolls of 01-50. On rolls of 51-75, the character can force the animal to carry him or her, but with such difficulty as to cut the animal & speed by half. If 76-00 is rolled, the animal will fight. Draft animals will balk and refuse to pull a vehicle the character is riding in 50% of the time. Similarly, pack animals will refuse to carry the character's property or anything he or she has handled 50% of the time. If 01-50 is rolled, draft and pack animals refuse; 51-90, they will submit and act normally, but on 91-00, they will fight. Equine creatures of greater than animal intelligence will be hostile toward the victim; they will flee (75%) or attack (25%).

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(B) Bad luck will follow the victim. Once a day, as he or she attempts a feat such as spellcasting, melee combat, lockpicking, whatever — depending on his or her class — the DM will roll d20. Unless a natural 20 (no modifiers) is rolled, the attempt will fail miserably. Later attempts to cast another spell, strike another blow, etc., are unaffected.

(C) The Romany mark will appear on the victim's forehead. Druids, bards, rangers, and thieves recognize this mark, although recognition does not necessarily prejudice them against the character. Magic-users can identify the mark by casting *read magic* and clerics by *detect charm*. All gypsies recognize the mark instantly — and will harass or attack the character, pursuing if he or she flees. A cleric can cause the mark and the ill effects to vanish with *remove curse*, but most lawful ones will refuse to do so unless the victim makes restitution to the offended gypsies.

The *Blessing of the Gypsies* is the reverse in language and effect. Equine

creatures are well disposed toward the character. He or she can quiet restless horses, etc., and such animals will work to the limit of their endurance if kindly treated. Once a day, the DM rolls d20 for good luck, which renders any attempted action instantly successful unless a natural 20 is rolled. The "blessed" mark will put any gypsies encountered at the character's service.

### Generating gypsies

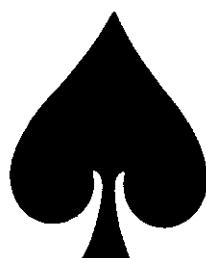
With their special abilities, gypsies are a powerful breed. DMs ought to choose very carefully the qualities and characteristics of the gypsies they place in their campaigns, instead of relying on random dice rolls. This is especially true of the spellcasters. As a very rough rule of thumb, consider an average band of eight men and seven women. Of the twenty-five children, ten are old enough to be zero-level thieves. (A zero-level thief subtracts 5% from each function listed on the "Thief Function Table" on page 28 of the Players Handbook. Use d4

to determine hit points.)

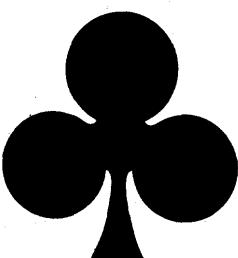
Five of the men are thieves of 2nd-5th level; two are fighters of 3rd and 6th levels. The 3rd-level fighter has ability scores suitable for a bard, and has the hit points acquired up to 5th level as a thief. He aspires to the nobility. Their leader is a 2nd-level noble (bard).

Five of the women act as thieves of the 1st-5th level. One is a 3rd-level fighter. The seventh woman is a fortune teller at the 4th level. The thieves are armed with cudgels or slings and daggers; they wear no armor, but consider the possible AC bonuses for dexterity. The fighters wear leather armor and use short swords, slings, and daggers. The nobleman has the spells *animal friendship* and *entangle*. The fortune teller has *charm person*, *ventriloquism*, *unseen servant*, *ESP*, and *audible glamer*. The spellcasting ability is better balanced for this hypothetical group than is necessary for running a Romany band. Again, each DM knows best what is needed for his or her campaign and players.

### GYPSY FORTUNE TELLING CHART



SPADES



CLUBS

| Die roll | Card  | Fortune                             |
|----------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 01-02    | Two   | a journey                           |
| 03-04    | Three | a journey over water                |
| 05-06    | Four  | a journey underground               |
| 07-08    | Five  | beware of orcs                      |
| 09-10    | six   | beware of snakes                    |
| 11-12    | Seven | a tall, dark stranger               |
| 13-14    | Eight | lucky in love<br>(+1 to charisma)   |
| 15-16    | Nine  | unlucky in love<br>(-1 to charisma) |
| 17-18    | Ten   | trust no one                        |
| 19-20    | Jack  | trust a stranger                    |
| 21-22    | Queen | trust a woman                       |
| 23-24    | King  | trust a man                         |

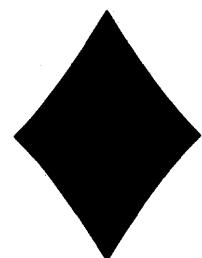
| Die roll | Card  | Fortune                             |
|----------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 73-74    | Two   | the full moon is lucky              |
| 75-76    | Three | beware the<br>waning moon           |
| 77-78    | Four  | news at the new moon                |
| 79-80    | Five  | warning                             |
| 81-82    | Six   | a dark lady                         |
| 83-84    | Seven | favor of the gods<br>(+1 to wisdom) |
| 85-86    | Eight | the gods frown<br>(-1 to wisdom)    |
| 87-88    | Nine  | misfortune                          |
| 89-90    | Ten   | a handsome man                      |
| 91-92    | Jack  | gifts                               |
| 93-94    | Queen | beware gifts<br>from a stranger     |
| 95-96    | King  | DM's option                         |

| Die roll | Card  | Fortune                             |
|----------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 25-26    | Two   | trust an elf                        |
| 27-28    | Three | don't trust a stranger              |
| 29-30    | Four  | don't trust a woman                 |
| 31-32    | Five  | don't trust a man                   |
| 33-34    | Six   | disaster                            |
| 35-36    | Seven | important news                      |
| 37-38    | Eight | important news<br>from a halfling   |
| 39-40    | Nine  | important news<br>from a man        |
| 41-42    | Ten   | important news<br>from two women    |
| 43-44    | Jack  | a dwarf befriends you               |
| 45-46    | Queen | good health<br>(+1 to constitution) |
| 47-48    | King  | poor health<br>(-1 to constitution) |

| Die roll | Card  | Fortune               |
|----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 49-50    | Two   | success with money    |
| 51-52    | Three | a spendthrift         |
| 53-54    | Four  | search to the east    |
| 55-56    | Five  | search to the west    |
| 57-58    | Six   | search to the north   |
| 59-60    | Seven | search to the south   |
| 61-62    | Eight | fair weather          |
| 63-64    | Nine  | foul weather          |
| 65-66    | Ten   | a gnome befriends you |
| 67-68    | Jack  | use your gifts wisely |
| 69-70    | Queen | a fair woman          |
| 71-72    | King  | a wealthy merchant    |



HEARTS



DIAMONDS

| ACES     |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| Die roll | Suit              |
| 97       | Spades            |
| 98       | Hearts            |
| 99       | Diamonds          |
| 00       | Clubs             |
|          | Fortune           |
|          | death             |
|          | love              |
|          | treasure          |
|          | answer a question |

# Bleeder

Created by Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: Rare  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: 4/6/8  
MOVE: 9"  
HIT DICE: 77-84 hit points  
% IN LAIR: 40%  
TREASURE TYPE: See below  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 10  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Blood drain, ram  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Regeneration  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
INTELLIGENCE: Average to high  
ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil  
SIZE: L (6' dia.)  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

The bleeder is a fearsome monster found in caverns or ruins. Its spherical body resembles that of the dreaded beholder, but the "eyestalks" of the bleeder are actually bloodsucking tentacles.

Bleeders favor a diet of humans and horses, but will attack anything having blood (including such things as bloated stirges).

In the bleeder's digestive process, blood is used to generate energy which is stored within organs in the body and tentacles (1 hp worth of ingested blood becoming 1 charge). The creature uses this energy for motor activity and healing. The transformation from blood to energy takes 1 round.

A bleeder expends 1 charge every 2 turns in motor activity (and thus is al-

most always hunting prey). Spending 1 charge enables the bleeder to heal 1 hit point of damage to each of its 10 tentacles and 1 point of damage to its central body (but not its eye). The healing ability can be used once per round, and the creature can attack as usual while the regeneration is going on.

Bleeders prefer to float above surfaces rather than resting upon them, and move by means of *Levitation*. (An organ located in the upper half of the rubbery, spherical central body is a valued ingredient in magical potions and inks concerned with levitation and similar acts.) A bleeder may, however, "shut itself down," remaining motionless and insensitive on the ground, and in that state remain alive for long periods. To awaken from this hibernation, the creature requires an influx of electrical energy, or a physical shock caused by a fall, blow, wound, or heat.

The bleeder's 10 tentacles are retracted into the body when not needed (resembling eyestalks up to 4 feet in length), but can lash out to a full stretch of 20 feet with blinding speed. All 10 tentacles may act separately, or they may strike a single human-sized target in concert. The initial strike of a tentacle causes 1-8 points of damage as the barbed tip attaches to the victim. Sucking orifices within the barbs will drain blood at the rate of 2 hp per round (per tentacle), beginning on the round after the hit was made.

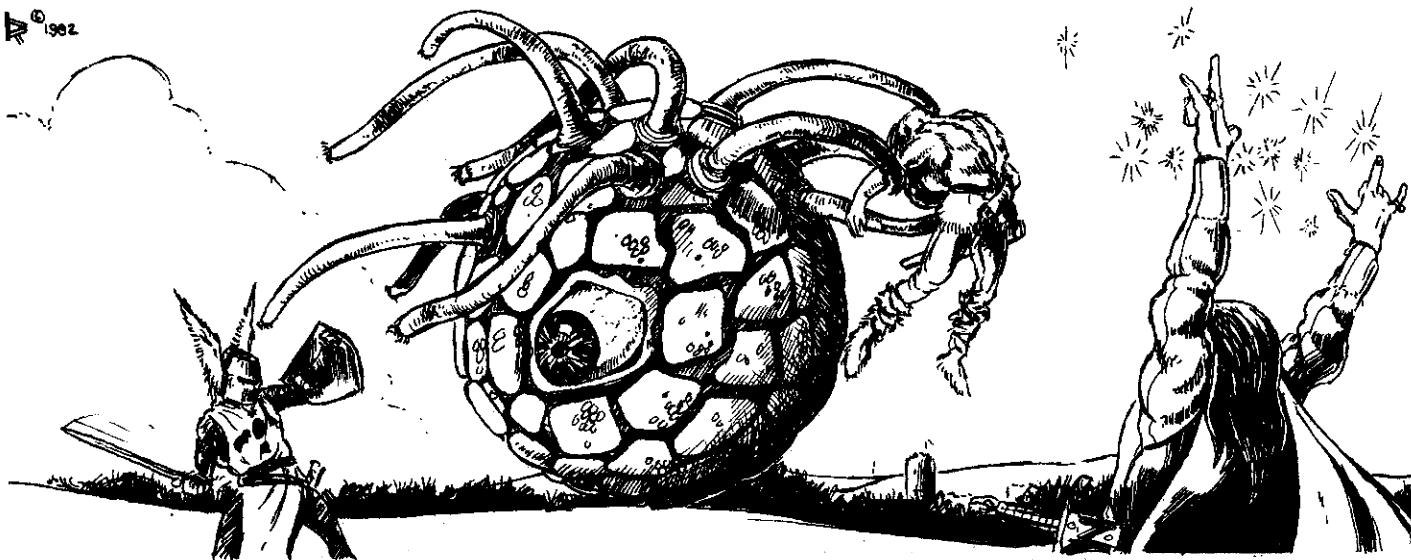
If a tentacle attached to a victim is damaged but not destroyed by any single blow, it will instantly and automatically drain from the victim's body sufficient blood (in hit points) to restore itself. Note that this reflex effect occurs after every non-killing hit, even if the ten-

tacle absorbs more than one wound in a round. This instinct does not respond to damage suffered by the central body or other tentacles. A tentacle will continue to drain blood if it is doing so when the central body reaches zero hit points. Tentacles not attached to a victim at that time are incapable of further activity.

A tentacle will remain imbedded in a victim until the bleeder retracts it, or until it is torn free by the victim and/or comrades exerting a total strength of 22. A victim freed from the tentacles forcefully will suffer 1-6 points of damage per tentacle as the barbs come loose. A bleeder will voluntarily retract a tentacle only when its victim is reduced to zero hit points, or when its central body is down to 5 hit points or less (30% chance, check each round when applicable).

Bleeders have been known to ram or crush opponents with their bulk. This attack does 1-8 points of damage, and is often made purposefully while the body is turning and its tentacles flailing, so that victims are dislodged from ledges and precarious positions. The creature's tentacles each have 6 hit points and are armor class 6. The central body has a hard, rubbery skin and is AC 4. It has 11-18 hit points, and bears a large eye (AC 8, 6 hp, 12" infravision). If its eye is destroyed, a bleeder may still locate opponents within 1" by smell and sensing vibrations.

Bleeders often meet in mid-air struggles to the death. The loser's body is left to become the breeding ground for offspring. The central body is covered with a fluid secreted by the victor, and within 1 day, from 1-4 young are "hatched." Each offspring is 50% as powerful as an adult in all respects, and matures in one month.





## Stymphalian birds

Created by Michael Parkinson

Author's note: Throughout history, creatures and characters from classic myths and legends have stirred the imagination. The ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game would be a lesser game if it lacked legendary monsters such as vampires, medusae, and unicorns, to name a few such creatures.

Another formidable and fearsome creature of myth not included in the official AD&D™ monster list can be taken from the legend of the sixth task of Hercules — to destroy the carnivorous birds of Lake Stymphalus.

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: 2-12 (*in flight*)  
*or 30-180 (*in lair*)*  
 ARMOR CLASS: 4  
 MOVE: 6"/18"  
 HIT DICE: 4  
 % IN LAIR: 20% (*but see below*)

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## Spriggan

Created by Roger Moore

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*  
 NO. APPEARING: 3-18  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 MOVE: 9"  
 HIT DICE: 1  
 % IN LAIR: 15%  
 TREASURE TYPE: *K on individuals; P, Q, Y in lair*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5 (2-16)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Silver or magical weapons to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 10%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Low to average*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*  
 SIZE: *S (2' tall)*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

Spriggans are small humanoids, each of them having a distinctive, grotesque appearance. Differences between the members of a band of spriggans are considerable; no two ever have the same clothing, facial appearance, or height. Spriggans form small raiding bands and ravage the country near their lair, much as brigands do.

Individual spriggans have the thieving abilities of a 1st-level thief, with the exception of the band's leader, who has the abilities of a 5th-8th level (d4 + 4) thief. The leader of the spriggans is also able to bring down a *curse* one time per month. The curse takes effect when the leader touches a victim or is hit by the intended victim. Once the leader first employs the curse power, he will be "charged" for 10 rounds thereafter and will try to affect as many enemies as he can in that time. The leader will usually only use this ability if the spriggans' lair is raided and their spoils taken. Typical spriggan curses include penalties (-1 to -4) to saving throws, "to hit" rolls, or the like. Such a curse has a duration of 4-12 rounds depending on its severity, with weaker curses having longer durations. The effect may be negated by a *Remove curse* or a *Limited wish*.

All spriggans are capable of *Enlarge Self*, a special spell that increases a spriggan's height to six times normal, generally up to about 12'. This height increase gives the spriggan the attack power of a hill giant (2-16 damage/round, or +3 to hit and +7 to damage). This power lasts 4-9 (d6 + 3) rounds and can be

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1 -8  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 INTELLIGENCE: Animal  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral  
 SIZE: M  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
 Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

These man-eaters dwell in the midst of malarial marshes in damp, temperate to tropical climates, but will plague the surrounding areas up to 10 miles away. Their weed-choked, stagnant swamps are inevitably girdled by thick vegetation, hence often the birds' lair is accessible only by air. Colonies in such places are densely populated (30-180 adults and 10-60 non-fighting fledglings).

The Stymphalian bird has an ibis-like body with an extended neck; grasping talons and a fell beak, both of brass; and barbed feathers.

When flying overhead, a group of these birds can loose a rain of feathers which will cause damage on any character or creature below equal to a roll of d4 plus the victim's effective armor class. Double damage, or perhaps even more than

that, is rendered upon large targets such as horses. This attack can be made only once a day by any particular group in flight.

When it lands on a victim, a Stymphalian bird will attack with its claws (doing 1-6/1-6) instead of its beak. If both talons strike, the target is knocked prone unless he rolls less than his strength on 4d6.

These foul birds are carriers of (roll d6): 1, blood disease (acute, terminal); 2, cardiovascular-renal disease (acute, terminal); 3, connective tissue disease (chronic, severe); 4, gastro-intestinal (chronic, mild); 5, gastro-intestinal (acute, terminal); 6, any two of the above diseases.

The birds can only be damaged by magic weapons or spells. A special concoction of hydra blood, when smeared on the blades and points of magic weapons, will kill the bird unless it makes a saving throw versus poison; of course, the creature must be wounded (by a successful hit) before the poison can effect. A successful saving throw vs. poison indicates no additional damage (the toxin did not enter the bloodstream).

Stymphalian birds have such a violent stench that their opponents, when in me-

lee with a hunting flight or within 100 yards of the lair, fight at -2 to hit (or at -1 if a saving throw vs. poison is made). Similarly, any spells attempted by a spell caster under these conditions have a 20% chance of failure (only 10% if the caster makes the saving throw vs. poison), in addition to any saving throws vs. magic that the birds are entitled to. This is because of the nausea and distraction caused by the acrid fumes. A new saving throw vs. poison must be rolled for in every round when the stench is present. The odor and noise these birds exude make it hard for them to gain surprise.

It may be possible to panic the birds (even an entire colony), depending on the method employed and the Dungeon Master's discretion: for example, Hercules used a device fashioned by the Goddess Athene.

These savage birds will greedily try to attack any humanoid or demi-human. Because the Stymphalian birds eat the local citizenry and peasantry, kill animals with their feathers, and spread diseases, any party attempting or offering to destroy or rout an established colony might be rewarded (or promised a reward) by those who are grateful. The birds themselves do not collect treasure.

used once per day, usually to scare opponents into fleeing or surrendering their valuables. It takes two segments for a spriggan to grow to its enlarged height, and the creature need only make a simple somatic gesture (placing thumb in mouth and puffing out cheeks, as if blowing up a balloon).

Their use of this power has led many peasants to believe that spriggans are actually the ghosts of long-dead hill giants, and some folk may use holy symbols or holy water when confronted by a spriggan band — for good reason, and with good effect. Though spriggans are not undead, they are repelled by holy symbols and will flee if splashed with holy water. Some sages believe this happens because spriggans are said to have originated on a lower plane. Holy water does not do actual damage to spriggans, except as it affects their morale.

Spriggans gain no bonuses for dexterity or racial type when using the thieving tables for pickpocketing, hiding in shadows, etc. They have a -25% penalty to their chance to climb walls, due to their height. They cannot use thieving abilities when in giant form.

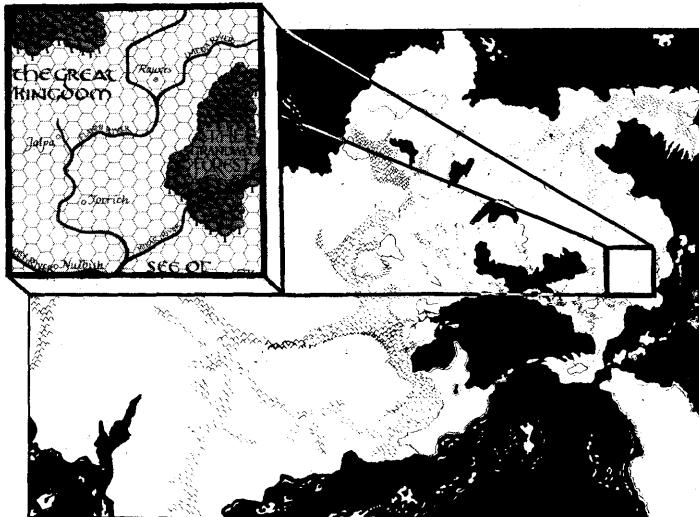
These creatures are usually found in

hilly regions. They often set up housekeeping in a lair once occupied by hill giants. One of their other major occupations in life besides robbery is kidnapping; spriggans have been known to steal the children and babies of dwarves, halflings, and gnomes, and either hold them for ransom or bring them up as their own, training each child to be a fighter or a thief. Differences between spriggan babies and babies of other races will be obvious to anyone, since



spriggan children are as ugly and foul-tempered as their parents.

Spriggans have a wide variety of skin colors; individual complexions are usually some shade of brown, gray, or yellow-white. They speak their alignment language, the common tongue, and their own language. The leader (and only the leader) knows the thieves' cant, since he may have occasional ties with a local thieves' guild to sell some of the spriggans' stolen goods.



# THE GREAT KINGDOM AND THE KNIGHTS OF DOOM

## NOTES FROM THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ FANTASY SETTING

### BY ROB KUNTZ

#### News from the Great Kingdom

Much news is to be heard as of late from the surrounding provinces of the Great Kingdom as well as from Rauxes itself. A fleet from the recalcitrant Sea Barons has been dispatched to aid the cousin of the OverKing, who commands North Province.

It is rumored that this movement came down as an Imperial order from Rauxes to help alleviate the problems created by the incursions of Almor and Nyrond into the southern part of Bone March, as well as to answer the North Provinces' call for aid against these attacks. These incursions come at a time of continued raids from the humanoid bands near Bellport who have not thrown in their banners with the Herzog as of yet.

The Herzog continues to muster his forces, awaiting the arrival of 2,000 seasoned veterans of battles with the sea-wolves of the north. It is said that the Lord High Admiral of Asperdi is actually sending his most gifted commander to see to the raids around Bellport, reaffirm supply routes to the north, and open a solid marching front to move down the Teesar Torrent. This plan is seen as a two-pronged attack, possibly with the horns protruding south from the Blemu Hills and across the Teesar to storm Knurl. In any case Knurl is being fortified against any advent and the armies of Nyrond and Almor are waiting...

At Rauxes, all is astir. Recently a league having association with the Arch-Cleric of Pholtus (of the Blinding Light religion) and having offices in many temples in and around the OverKing's capital, has announced its great disfavor with the OverKing and its contempt for his chaotic deeds of the present. It has been claimed, by strong practitioners of the faith that the OverKing will not be satiated until all free people from all lands are enslaved and at the feet of his intolerable throne.

In support of these claims, Emasstus Carcosa, a well-known sage and Patriarch for the high seat of Pholtus at

Rauxes, has released substantial information regarding OverKing Irid's past. He states in a letter, supposedly sent to all Free Nations, that: "We have in our midst a devil incarnate. Hear me, people, that the thoughts of Irid the insane are as black as his throne. We who worship the light will not stand still as the machinations of a madman destroy the once splendid Kingdom we have now grown to hate and cower in! The plans of this man you call OverKing are those of a child nursed upon the breast of lunacy!"

Carcosa went on to specify that much of the madness was created from within. In fact, it is now known that a very high-level mage who was thought dead has indeed shown up once again. He is Xaene the accursed, cavorter with demons, arch-enemy of the Mages' Guild at Rauxes (which he could not subvert nor stand to serve), dabbler into all the arcane arts of destruction and chaos, and last but not least court wizard to Irid. It is told that it was Xaene who spoke to the demons, the undead, the humanoids, and under threats, sacrifice, and blood-letting created early the power which Irid controls today. It was Xaene who created the Demonic Knights of Doom, who marshal the OverKing's armies, who convert all evils to their bolstering ranks, and lead those fanatics of the Midnight's Darkness Clan who are in opposition at this time to the Secret League of Pholtus.

Carcosa called upon all good people to heed these warnings and tribulations and rally to the support of the hallowed hall of Pholtus. He called upon all saintly religions, such as those of St. Cuthbert and of Ehlonna and Heironious, to swell the ranks of good.

Shortly after making these announcements, Emasstus Carcosa was ordered arrested for treason and for subverting the state with falsified information. There has been an interim period in this affair, for the sage/patriarch could not be located and the followers of Pholtus would neither support nor deny what their most exalted leader had said. It is known by

some, though, that forces from Irid's palace are scouring the capital and surrounding countryside for him. These contingents of searchers are led by:

#### Demonic Knights of Doom

**FREQUENCY:** Very rare  
**NO. APPEARING:** Variable (see below)  
**ARMOR CLASS:** Variable  
**MOVE:** 12" on foot,  
           21" mounted (see below)  
**HIT DICE:** 4-10 hit dice +  
**% IN LAIR:** Nil  
**TREASURE TYPE:** Varies (see below)  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** As level plus special  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** Per weapon type  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** Nil  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Armor absorbs  
           heat-based attacks  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** Standard  
**INTELLIGENCE:** Controlled,  
           but exceptional  
**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic evil, neutral evil,  
           or lawful evil  
**SIZE:** L (6-7')  
**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil  
**Attack/Defense Modes:** Nil

These Knights appear as normal men with undistinguishable features, their faces hidden by visors. They always wear gold-plated armor — in defiance and mockery, it is said, of those aligned lawful good. They will appear mounted or on foot depending upon the type of unit they are leading, with that variability described below. These controlled servants of the OverKing and Xaene were created by the two wizards to marshal armies and to convert all whom they encounter, by the sword or by fear of death.

**4th-5th level:** These generally serve as captains of forces of from 100-200 lower-level soldiers. They use +1 swords. Their +1 chain mail absorbs 10% of the damage from any heat-based attack.

**6th-7th level:** These knights are greater captains, or colonels, in charge of contingents ranging from 200-500 men. They use +2 swords, and their +2 chain mail will absorb 15% of the damage from heat-based attacks.

**8th-10th level:** These are the generals of campaigns, leading armies of 1,000-4,000 men or more. They wear +3 plate and wield +2 two-handed swords. Their armor absorbs 20% of the damage from heat-based attacks. It is rumored that there are but five of these generals, and the toughest of the lot is a 10th-level knight who rides a horse that spits flame.

**11th level and up:** There are only two Marshals. The greater of the two serves the Northern and Eastern Provinces. He is armed with a *sword of cold* and +3 plate. He is said not to fear fire of any type. The lesser Marshal, serving the Southern and Western Provinces, is armed with a *mace of disruption* +4 and is armored in +3 plate. The latter Marshal is at this time much in the consul of the Holy Censor of Medegia. It is rumored that the Marshals can withstand all fires but dragon breath.

These knights all have scores of 15 or better in each ability. Though none of them has done open combat within the recent past, it is highly rumored that some of the generals and most definitely the Marshals have superhuman strengths and constitutions.

The makeup of any unit the knights are leading is detailed below. They always lead troops of veteran to elite status, and will always have a varying number of personal guards (5-15% of listed troop numbers) of levels 2nd through 4th. These retainers are said to be the hand-picked troops of OverKing Irid himself, which he entrusts to the knights to send on special missions of raiding, spying, etc.; thus, they gain +1 on all morale checks during such missions. They generally come armored as the type of unit they are assigned to, but the 4th-level retainers are typically bedecked with +1 weapons and armor.

#### Unit composition

35% cavalry, as follows:

10% light horse scouts with swords, spears, leather or studded leather armor, target shields.

15% medium horse with swords, lances, chain hauberks, kite shields.

10% heavy horse with lances, bastard swords, full plate or plate mail, kite shields.

50% infantry:

10% light skirmish type with assorted light swords, axes, maces, no shields.

20% medium foot with long swords, spears, maces, chain hauberk, no shields.

10% heavy foot with bastard swords, long spears, assorted pole arms, chain mail, and shields.

10% armored foot with halberds, pikes, assorted pole arms, full plate or plate mail, no shields.

15% Missile:

5% light archers with short bows,

spears, short swords, leather jerkins.

3% light crossbowmen with light crossbows, short swords, axes, leather jerkins.

2% longbowmen with longbows, swords, leather armor.

5% horse archers with composite bows, swords, studded leather armor, target shields.

Some popular or notable units include the following:

**Heavy Foot regiment:** Symbol is a bronze baboon, and the mode (color) of dress is colored saffrons, chocolates, and bone white. This regiment is known as the "howlers" when they go into combat, for they howl and scream, causing many a non-battle-ready foreign unit to retreat in dismay.

**Medium Horse regiment:** Symbol is a tan horse, and dress is black and aquamarine. This unit is known for expertise with the javelin while either mounted or dismounted. Their nickname is the "bolters," for they are hard to keep from charging into a fray once the battle has been joined.

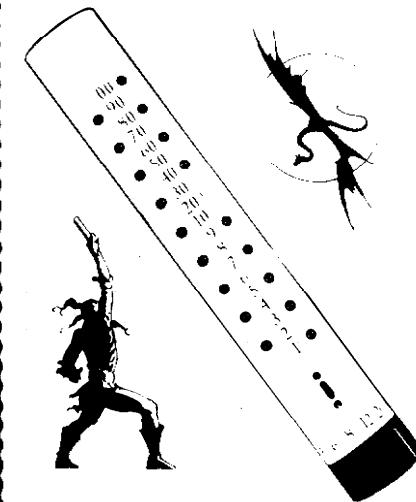
**Horse-Archer regiment:** Symbol is two silver arrows crossed upon the colors of ebony and scarlet. These warriors are very accurate with their composite bows and are called the "pointers," for they always lead the way on campaigns and skirmish missions.

Note: The assigning of these names, colors, etc. was made easy by the application and use of the Dungeon Masters Guide. Though a wealth of material dealing with the armies of the World of Greyhawk will be published in the future, there are always units from the Great Kingdom (or any land, for that matter) forming, reforming; or disbanding, so the want for new unit types, names, and colors along with the units' distinctive features and/or capabilities are always needed and helpful to both the miniature collector or to those players and/or DMs who wish a more realistic tone to their assorted "paper" armies.

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# Skitterbugging

by  
**GENE  
 O'NEILL**

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"Astro-geophysical crewmen, *skitter-buggers*, derive their nickname from the Terran water bug that walks on water. The skitterbug darts about on bent spindly legs like a homeless nomad. Its human namesake sees an analogy to his life, darting from star to star, an astral nomad..."

From the introduction to *The Astro-Geophysical Handbook* by the L-5 Foundation, Luna One, 2112.

Cyranus began a new day, rising above the desert horizon on its fifth planet. Morning rays found the geodesic dome where the All-American Boy fixed breakfast for the four-member crew.

As Cyranus continued the journey, its light discovered junior grade recorder Finn M'Cormac staring across this new, flat landscape.

Nothing moved in the dawn shadows that silhouetted a clump of brown thorn bushes. Dwarfed by a lack of rain, the dullish-colored plants blended into the sandy background that supported a few reptile-like creatures, and a predator similar to a mongoose.

For the next six weeks Finn and his mates would circle the planet's equator with seismograms, pin-pointing whether the world's natural wealth would support colonization.

The thought of a busy city imposed over this quiet scene brought a frown to

Finn's face. But, at least this place is good for skitterbugging, Finn thought, taking a breath of clean, fresh air from the cloudless sky. The shuttle from their mothership, *Aquarius*, was taking crews to other habitable planets circling Cyranus that looked far more hostile.

The aroma of coffee shifted Finn's thoughts from the desert to his empty stomach — the rich smell enhanced by the crisp, dry air. He moved back into the dining area of the dome. "Coffee smells good," he said, taking a seat at the dining table.

"Good-morning-junior-recorder," the All-American Boy said, his voice an unemotional monotone, placing a foodpak and cup of steaming coffee in front of Finn.

Gent Jackson slipped into a seat across from Finn and nodded. "Hey, where's the orange juice?"

The All-American Boy shuffled over on mechanical feet with the juice carton. "Good-morning-driller."

The big man took a tentative sip, holding up his hand in the wait signal. "Hmmm." He swished the juice in his mouth like he was sampling a vintage wine, and the All-American Boy waited like an expectant wine steward. Gent took another sip and smacked his lips, making an OK sign with his thumb and forefinger. The All-American Boy returned to his work.

From the doorway to the sleeping cubicles, the two other crew members hurried into the dining area and sat down: Mikela Lucchesi, recorder and team leader; and Shigawara Kenjo, the team shooter — the explosives expert. The crew ate rapidly, anxious to begin the first day's shooting.

Finn pushed away his empty foodpak and watched Mikela eat, admiring her beauty. She was tall, her slight breasts and hips barely contouring her athletic figure. Her only adornment was a curious black tattoo on her left cheekbone: The five-pointed star, no larger than a dilated pupil, was a symbol for the Church of the Transcendent, a small sect popular with skitterbuggers and some starship personnel, particularly pilots. Senior 'Scendents were rumored to be telepathic. Finn frowned, recalling another rumor: 'Scendents practiced celibacy.

In the kitchen the All-American Boy cocked his head: It was the hum again, vibrating through his circuitry with an uncomfortable sensation.

*The Queen Mother sensed peril, sending one of the ancient songs through the Horde. It was the Song of Danger, a song almost forgotten. All in the Horde vibrated rapidly, sharing the emotion of fear. But the Queen Mother sensed a strange, high-pitched vibration — a disruption of the smooth harmony of the song. An*

*She shrugged, then touched the tiny cheek tatoo and nodded. "I'll try." She sat at the dining table, closed her eyes, and seemed to be going into a trance. The men waited and watched.*

alien vibration, produced by — *The Queen Mother* didn't know.

Abruptly, the All-American Boy left the dome, unnoticed by the crew. He went to the shooter's skimmer and flipped open the explosive locker, removing a shiny detonator. The All-American Boy disappeared for a few seconds behind the shadowed side of the dome, reappearing without the metal cylinder. As if nothing unusual had occurred, he went back inside and resumed breakfast clean-up.

"Hey, we could use some more juice," Gent said, chuckling as the All-American Boy hustled into the dining room with another carton of orange juice. When the crew first made camp, Gent had fingered the red forty-four emblazoned across the little robot's chest, and dubbed him with the nickname.

Finished eating, Gent excused himself and left the table. After a few moments, he returned from his sleeping cubicle with a strange expression on his face. "Something downbeat going on." His voice was tight, hoarse.

The All-American Boy had cleared off the table but lingered with his arms full of cups and empty foodpaks.

"What's that?" asked Finn. Shig glanced up from his coffee cup, but Mikela studied her crewchief notebook.

"Well . . . I'm missing things from my sleeper . . . like my watch." A small vein bulged near the corner of the big man's left eye as he scowled uncharacteristically.

Finn snapped his fingers. "That reminds me; I couldn't find my gold pen this morning." He smiled at Gent. "Guess I misplaced it. Kind of a funny coincidence."

"Yeah, a coincidence," the driller said in an unconvinced tone.

"It'll turn up," Finn said, finishing his coffee.

"Yeah, well . . ." Gent paused, glancing at each of the other crew members, the blue vein throbbing as his voice rose. ". . . I better not catch a coincidence in my sleeper, unless it's looking for a kicked butt."

Surprised by his reaction, Finn stared at the big man, who looked back menacingly. They had been crewmates several times, and Finn had never seen Gent angry or in a bad mood. But then, Finn thought, I've never seen Gent when he felt someone had robbed him.

The All-American Boy slipped away from the dining area, the air heavy with tension.

Shig defused the situation. "I have two timepieces," said the soft-spoken Oriental. "Please use this one until you find your own piece." He handed Gent an expensive watch/calculator.

For a long moment, the driller just stared at the little man; then he grinned,

the vein near his eye disappearing. "Hey, upbeat. Thanks, Shig."

Finn took a deep breath and sighed as the two other men discussed jumpmusic — Gent's hobby and favorite subject. Finn glanced over at Mikela and smiled to himself; she had not been listening, totally absorbed in her notes. Finally the crew chief looked up.

Tapping her pencil on the table, Mikela cleared her throat. "A few things before we start." Everyone took out a notebook as she gave the detailed compass settings and other navigation details. "And Finn, please set the autos on the robot's skimmer." She looked back at her notebook. "We'll go slow at first, until Finn and I are sure that the break lines are sharp on the records." She looked up and smiled. "Questions?" After a moment's silence, she added, "The robot will double back here at noon and move the dome while we eat. Secure your personal gear." Pocketing the notebook, she rose from the table. 'Check your skimmers and let's do a little skitterbugging."

Outside, Finn moved between the five skimmers, each loaded with the specialized equipment of its user. He stopped at the All-American Boy's vehicle and punched the compass settings into the computer-pilot. He checked the load of geophones, self-contained generators capable of sensing energy waves, known simply as jugs to the crew. The robot laid six jugs a kilometer apart in a line known as a "spread."

"You're set," Finn said, tapping the robot's shoulder.

He checked his own skimmer. As crew troubleshooter he carried spare parts, a first-aid station, comm gear, extra CO, backpack extinguishers, and other essentials that wouldn't fit on the other skimmers.

While Finn mounted, a small gray creature darted from underneath the skimmer, disappearing into a nearby cluster of thorn bushes. It resembled a miniature dragon — one of the reptiles? Gazing at the distant landscape, a panoramic wasteland almost overwhelming in its drab desolation, Finn nodded to himself: This is why I'm a skitterbugger. He looked out on a naked, virgin planet — before it was covered with forests, crops, farms, cities, and people. He had the opportunity to look where no one had looked before. Of course, Finn had seen wilderness back on Earth, but this was different; this was pre-wilderness — a natural canvas, untouched by the hand of man. The Corps of Terraformers followed the skitter-buggers, then the colonists. A decade, maybe two, and this pre-wilderness would disappear. Finn blinked, feeling fortunate indeed.

The All-American Boy started moving westerly, the four other skimmers following, with bright Cyranus shining against the crew's backs.

Finn helped the robot lay out the first spread of jugs, quickly burying the can-shaped instruments underground and marking the location with a green flag. Then they skimmed past the firing point and began on a second spread. Finn began to sweat in the dry heat, and motioned for the robot to continue ahead after the second group was buried.

Heading to the first shot point, Finn met Gent skimming up the line. "Finished drilling the first one already?" Finn asked, his skimmer on hover.

"Yeah," Gent answered, "it's easy going in this sand. The lasers melt it and we get a glasslined shot-hole. No slumps or re-drills."

Finn nodded and turned his vehicle around, following the driller past the second spread of six green flags to the second shot point.

As Gent set up the drilling tripod, Finn arranged the other equipment. "Mikela wants the first few holes cut down one hundred and thirty meters," the driller said, setting the depth gauge on the lasers. Four minutes later, he had finished drilling his second shot hole. Finn staked the hole with a red flag as Gent packed up. After a few moments, they skimmed away in opposite directions, Finn returning to the first shot point and Mikela's skimmer.

Shig had just loaded the hole with five kilos of plastimon explosive. He advised Mikela, "Hole loaded and armed."

The crewchief nodded, adjusting filter settings on her recording console; then she squinted into a thin view slot of the seismic camera. "Look," she said to Finn, leaning back.

He stepped up to the seated woman and kneeled, peering into the thin aperture. He saw twelve horizontal lines of green light, barely shimmering in the camera's darkness.

"Looks good," he said, standing up. "Want to shoot?"

Mikela nodded.

"Shooter," Finn shouted, "let's do one in ten seconds."

Shig flipped the arming toggle on his autodetonator.

The muffled blast rocked the grounded skimmers at the shot point, the energy wave from the explosion reflecting up through the surface crust, exciting the jugs to send an electrical wave back through Mikela's camera and processing equipment. She watched the twelve lines break up as the camera recorded the shot. The seismogram would reveal crustal densities; and it was the unusual density change that hid a pocket of steam, or natural gas, or oil, or . . . nothing.

The crew waited for Mikela's reaction to the shot.

*The Queen Mother was shocked: The sacred nest had been attacked! New ones destroyed. Vibrations — painful,*

confusing vibrations. The Queen Mother vibrated, sharing the emotion of dread. And again, she sensed an alien presence, resonating to the Horde's song.

The All-American Boy had doubled back to the geodesic dome. At the doorway, he cocked his head for a moment; then he went inside, returning a minute later with a small, shiny object in his hand.

Mikela let her breath out. "Pretty good . . ." she checked a few calculations from her notebook. "I think we're getting a slight muffling in this sand. Let's drill down another twenty meters and increase the plastimon to six kilos."

Finn relayed the revisions to shooter and driller; then he established the pattern that would structure his day. He worked the back spread, picking up a jug at each green flag, bypassed the front spread, and settled at the second shot point. Shoot, record, pickup, leapfrog to the next point.

The day was a recording success. Sixty shots. The crew had covered over seven hundred kilometers of the line. They were right on the six-week completion schedule.

*The horde vibrated with the Song of Anger. It had been so long. Only the Queen Mother remembered the ancient battles when there had been rival hordes.*

Mikela ate and retired to her compartment to do more calculations on the recordings. The three men sat at the dining table relaxing and drinking coffee, as the All-American Boy scurried about disposing of dinner trays.

Shig described the Okinawan martial art of Hai-ka to Gent. Finn decided that the little man's English had a musical lilt. ". . . Twelve lethal point." Shig stood and demonstrated a stiff-armed, extended-finger parry. The powerful thrust travelled to within a centimeter of Gent's eye—the move so quick that the reflexive blink followed the act.

"No thank you, Mr. Kenjo, sir," Gent gestured his surrender. He stood, bowed formally, and said, "No Sir, I'm on your team." As Shig sat back down, Gent pretended to shoot him with his finger. "Fooled you!" Laughing, he left the dining area. "Upbeat, yeah, yeah."

Finn sipped the hot coffee, enjoying the luxury of doing nothing. It had been a busy day.

A scant few minutes later, Gent roared back into the room like a wounded water buffalo. "It's gone — my lighter." His forehead was wrinkled with a frown. "I've looked everywhere." The vein throbbed near the corner of the big man's left eye. Then he added, visibly and audibly suppressing his outrage, "And it ain't just the lighter. My jumpmusic playdeck is gone!"

Finn looked at Shig. "Are you missing things, too?"

The Okinawan nodded.

"Klepto?" asked Gent, of no one in particular.

"A thief, Shig," Finn explained.

"Oh, no, that is not possible," the little man said in a sad voice. "One cannot steal from crewmates."

Gent snorted. "A klepto steals for excitement. He takes from everyone, especially his friends." He sputtered, choking on his own anger. He coughed. And the more risk, danger, and emotion, the more exciting the act . . . Downbeat."

"But we've all lost things," Finn interrupted.

"Yes," Shig added, "no one steals from himself."

Gent grinned a humorless smile, the vein still very noticeable. He opened his mouth to speak, but said nothing, shaking his head with disgust.

"Gentlemen . . ." Mikela stood in the doorway. The light highlighted the tiny star on her cheek. "Please remember that the dome was moved several hundred kilometers today. Things get shaken about." She paused for a moment, staring at the chronometer. "It is late and although your noisy enthusiasm for detective work is commendable, please save some of it for skitterbugging tomorrow." She turned and left.

Nothing more was said about kleptos. The three men finished their coffee in silence, Gent looking embarrassed.

As Finn settled into his sleeping hammock, he pictured Mikela. Quite a lady, he chuckled admiringly. She had neatly calmed down everyone about the missing stuff. But her moving explanation seemed a little too easy. Was there a klepto on the crew? Who? He drifted off, dreaming that he and Mikela were skimming over the surface of Cyranus V looking into a beautiful sunset. The dream ended abruptly as a giant hand snatched Cyranus, removing it from the horizon.

*The Queen Mother vibrated the Song of Battle. The Horde shared the frenzy of madness.*

The All-American Boy stood near Finn's hammock. As he watched the junior recorder's sleeping face, an overwhelming anger raced through his circuits: hostile urges of electricity.

Finn groaned, partially waking up.

The anger faded; the little robot quietly left the sleeping cubicle.

The second day was very hot — and frustrating for the crew. A series of problems aborted the first shot, and after a rare misfire the crew gathered to await the third attempt. Finn watched the chronometer count down yet another time: -3, -2, -1. The plastimon charge exploded one hundred fifty meters below

the sandy surface, rocking the parked skimmers and nervous crew.

An unexpected second wave followed the first. Finn felt like he was standing up in a rowboat.

"What was that?" Mikela shouted from the recorder's skimmer. "It knocked the traces off the paper like a nine on the Richter."

"I don't know," Finn answered, "I just —"

A third wave interrupted him, leaving the crew speechless as they stared at the blasted shot hole.

The ground trembled and sagged like a cake slumping after leaving the oven, the sinking surface leaving a circular depression in front of them twice the size of a skimmer. The crew felt the ground jingle again like trembling gelatin.

"We must have set off —" Finn started, but was interrupted again.

An opening, slightly larger than a drill hole, erupted near the center of the depression, raining sand and small rocks down on the shocked crew. No one had time to seek cover; they stood shielding their heads with their arms, pelted by the falling debris. The eruption was accompanied by a strong, sharp acid odor that permeated the choking dust.

Suddenly several shapes flew up out of the hole. The objects, about the size of footballs, circled clumsily in the dusty air several meters above the sunken shot point. Finn blinked. Three animate objects, each a cluster of yellow phosphorescent mist — shimmering ghost-like, giving off the pungent smell.

Mikela recovered her poise first. "They look like bees . . . no . . . shaped more like wasps . . ."

"But not solid. They're formed from mist," Finn muttered hoarsely, awed by the unique creatures. "Mist wasps . . . ?" He had never heard of such a creature anywhere in the explored universe. Perhaps they were unique to the Cyranus system, he thought or even to this planet.

"Yeah, giant mist wasps," Gent added, holding his nose with two fingers. "They stink like sulphur."

Shig moved a few steps closer toward the hole.

The three giant mist wasps seemed to gain their bearings as they circled. For a moment they vibrated rapidly, increasing the intensity of their phosphorescence. Then, slightly staggering their dives, they swooped down on the Okinawan. Shig assumed the Hai-ka defensive stance, ducking the first wasp, then gracefully sidestepping the next two like a matador. The first wasp hovered a moment, shimmering, its glow brightening; then it swooped again, trying to smash into Shig. He dodged to the side and struck a chopping blow that sliced through the misty creature and left it unharmed. Shig clutched a hand to his chest and slumped to the ground.

Meanwhile, Gent had grabbed a plasmon loading pole and stabbed at a wasp; the rod passed through the creature harmlessly. The big man waved the pole in the air, attracting the attention of the wasps from the injured Shig, preventing them from hovering and recharging for attack.

Finn and Mikela rushed to Shig's aid, pulling him back to the nearest skimmer. Finn kicked on the motor as Gent backed aboard, still fending off the three wasps with the pole. "Go, Finn," he cried, poking at a diving wasp.

Finn gunned the engine and scooted away from the three angry creatures. He guided the skimmer back toward base camp, sighing with relief.

"Look." Gent held up the aluminum pole, its tip melted. "They're hot after they shimmer to a glow."

"Yes, they are," Mikela said, smearing Shig's hand with healjell. Shig seemed barely conscious as she gave him a shot and bandaged the burned hand, which resembled a piece of roasted meat. "You'll be good as new after an hour's rest," she said softly as the drug took effect.

"We had better call in the All-American Boy," said Finn. He tried several times to make contact with the robot over the skimmer communicator, then said, "That's funny, he doesn't answer."

"You can try again later," Mikela said. "I must contact Command on the *Aquarius* and report." She tried to make contact with the starship, but the communicator only crackled with static.

"Oh, downbeat," Gent said, "we're being attacked by monsters and no one answers the phone at headquarters."

"We'll try from comm center at the dome," Finn said. "More power."

"And if that doesn't work, there may be another way. The *Aquarius* pilot . . ." Mikela's voice trailed off.

Finn glanced at the crewchief. She was touching the black star on her cheek. Realizing her intent, he asked, "What will you need when we reach camp?"

"Quiet," she whispered.

They landed at the geodesic dome a few minutes later, the wasps left far behind. Finn and Gent carried the sleeping Shig to his hammock, as Mikela tried central comm. The two passed her as she went to her sleeping cubicle, shaking her head.

"No luck, I guess," Finn said to the driller.

Gent rubbed the vein near his eye. "What the hell were them yellow things, Finn? Besides scary, I mean."

Finn shrugged.

"We must have stirred up their nest at the shot point."

Finn nodded absently, sitting down at the comm console. "Well, right now we need to figure out a defense."

"Uh-huh," Gent agreed, "but how do you do that against something like a

ghost? They're only mist, but able to charge themselves into boiling steam . . ."

"We need to cool them off," Finn said slowly. Then he remembered that the All-American Boy was still missing, left back on the line. "Hey, we'd better call the robot again." He tried several times with no luck. "I wonder if the wasps got him?" Finn thought aloud.

*The Queen Mother felt a strange sensation. It did not originate in the Horde. An alien presence was sending a song. The vibration was crude, clumsy. The Queen Mother recalled the ancient songs; the vibration did not seem to fit. She oscillated in harmony with the alien's waves, finally recognizing the basic vibrations. It was a primitive version of the Song of Peace from long ago when there were many hordes. But even the fiercest hordes observed the sanctuary of an underground nest — never destroying new ones. Peace? For a moment she hesitated, considering the fear, the dread, the pain of the Horde. She would have liked to return the Peace Song — but it was too late, the violation too great. Hundreds of new ones had been stilled. The Queen Mother sang her answer: the Song of Revenge. The rapid vibrations overwhelmed the alien's weaker song. The Horde seethed with rage.*

Mikela staggered from her room with glazed eyes. The men waited for her to speak. She slumped down at the dining table, and Gent poured her a drink from a pitcher of ice water. "I couldn't reach the *Aquarius*. Maybe the pilot isn't a 'Scendent; I couldn't tell." She took another sip of water. Finn could see that something else was worrying his crewchief.

"Mikela, what — ?"

She stopped his question by holding up her hand. "I felt myself drawn back to the shot point. I concentrated on that feeling." She paused again, taking another drink, her eyes clearing but her face showing deep concern. "I reached a presence of authority . . . feminine . . . a queen. Anyhow, an intelligent being. She seemed full of fear, hate, and confusion, mistaking my contact as a song from the past, a plea from an enemy. I requested peace. She rejected the request. Apparently our shot violated the sacred nesting place, killing many young wasps."

"An intelligent creature?" Finn was amazed.

Shig, looking none the worse for wear, had rejoined the crew.

"Yes," Mikela answered Finn, "but she completely rejected my plea. I felt an unreasonable hate . . ." Her voice trailed off as she silently recalled her strange communication with the queen.

Goosebumps rose on the back of Finn's neck. Intelligent mist wasps, angry for revenge. He swallowed and asked Mike-

la, "Nothing more can be done with the queen? No reasoning or explaining?"

She shook her head sadly.

"No, they are a dying race," she said. "The nest is their final colony—and their queen knows only vengeance."

A loud thump came from the doorway, interrupting the crew leader. The four humans turned to discover the All-American Boy, holding a large cone. Before the skitterbuggers could react, the robot threw the cone away with both its metal hands, sending it smashing into the comm console.

Everyone except Shig dropped to the floor, shielding their heads with their hands.

The Okinawan chuckled, picking up the detonator. "The robot did not set the fuse or arm the device," he said, still grinning. He threw the cylinder to Finn, who had stood up and was feeling foolish.

"Yeah, but look at the console," Gent said, pointing at the dented tuning module where the detonator had struck the communicator. He flipped on the console but got only static. "Can you fix it, Mikela?" he asked the crewchief, who was also the team electronics expert.

Before she could answer, more crackling static, along with the smell of burned plastic, came from from the now-immobile robot.

"The All-American Boy needs some work, too," Finn said, examining the device. He inspected the charred circuitry and microchips that controlled the robot, spotting a tiny piece of silver out of place. "Here's the villain that made a thief and a crazy boy out of our friend." Finn held up a tiny screw. "Shorted out some circuitry, and some of the chips probably need to be replaced, Mikela."

She nodded, already immersed in re-pairing the communicator. "I'll get to him next."

Finn checked the detonator in his other hand. "What's this for, Shig?"

"It's a detonator for one of the big CO<sub>2</sub> bombs for shot-hole fires."

"Jesus Christ!" Gent shouted, pointing at the doorway. A wasp flew in, apparently after tracking the All-American Boy back to the base camp. Gent grabbed the pitcher of ice water to protect himself as the wasp swooped. He ducked, pushing the pitcher through the creature. The wasp wobbled in the air in a stunned manner, its phosphorescence dulled to a faint glimmer.

For a second, Gent stared at the unlikely weapon in his hand, mumbling, "Ice water?" Then he cried, "Ice water!" and chased the mist wasp outside, trying to poke it with the pitcher.

He's right, Finn thought, something cold. We need to cool it off. Again he looked at the detonator he held . . . CO<sub>2</sub> . . . The fire extinguisher packs! Running outside, he grabbed up a CO<sub>2</sub> backpack and gun from the nearest skimmer,

shouting to Gent, 'Come on, this is better.' He slipped on the CO<sub>2</sub> pack, stretched the kinks from the feed hose, and clicked off the handgun safety.

Gent hurried to Finn's side. The mist wasp had regained its bearings, and, after building back its intense glow, it dove at the two skitterbuggers. Finn aimed the funnel-shaped barrel of the gun and squeezed the trigger. *Whoosh*. A cloud of icy smoke engulfed the wasp. As Finn and Gent watched, the creature condensed into yellow droplets and fell to the desert floor.

Shig and Mikela joined Finn and Gent near a circle of wet sand — all that remained of the mist wasp.

"Upbeat," Gent whispered, as the last of the yellow drops bubbled into the sand.

Glancing down at the CO<sub>2</sub> gun in his hand, Finn felt a sharp twinge of remorse in his chest. God Almighty, he thought, realizing that he had killed a sentient creature. What have I done?

After a long silence, Shig suggested an idea. "Suppose we drop one of my CO<sub>2</sub> canisters down the shot hole?"

"Now wait," Finn said, shaking his head. "Self defense is one thing, but the *Handbook* prohibits offensive action against an intelligent species without Command approval."

Mikela said, "You may be right technically, but we are unable to communicate with Command . . . a special situation. I think the important point is the degree of danger we face."

"That's right," Gent agreed. "It's not in the *Handbook*, nothing about mist wasps. We don't know how many are down that hole or what. I say bomb 'em."

"Just a minute," Finn said, holding up his hands. "At least let's try to recontact the queen. Mikela . . . ?"

She shrugged, then touched the tiny cheek tattoo and nodded. "I'll try." She sat at the dining table, closed her eyes, and seemed to be go into a trance.

The men waited and watched.

Several moments later, the crewchief stirred. Her eyelids flickered, she breathed in deeply, and was awake. After a drink of water, she shook her head. "Nothing. The wasp queen will not respond. She sees us as enemies." Looking at Finn, she added, 'She represents a true danger, and I think we should vote on Shig's idea. Finn?"

Reluctantly, Finn nodded. He had to agree to a ballot, but . . .

The vote was three to one in favor of detonating a CO<sub>2</sub> canister at the shot point.

After a few minutes, the crew had shaped a plan. Mikela would stay and work on the communicator, attempting to reach Command as soon as possible. Shig, nursing his tender hand, would help Gent do ordinance work. Finn would drive and provide guard support.

As they loaded equipment, Gent examined the safeties, threads, and time fuse on the recovered detonator. Satisfied, he screwed the cone into the base of a CO<sub>2</sub> canister. "Okay, let's blast that wasp queen."

For some reason, Finn remembered another creature that had been blasted to extinction in the twenty-first century — a marine mammal on Earth, also an intelligent creature. He had forgotten its name, but in his mind he pictured one of the huge animals — about the size and shape of a shuttlecraft. He pushed the image to the back of his mind as he gathered up the last extra CO<sub>2</sub> backpack. "Ready."

The three men mounted the skimmer as Cyranus began to set. It would be dark before they reached the shot point.

As they skimmed to the target area, Gent armed the canister by pulling the safeties and activating the plunger that fused the cone and canister together. All that remained was to set the timer on the fuse. "Ten minutes," he decided aloud. "Yeah, we're either in and out in ten minutes, or dead."

Finn looked ahead. Cyranus had set, and the dusk was alive with dancing yellow lights. A dozen wasp sentries, he thought, wondering how many remained underground. "They look like huge fireflies."

Gent snorted. "Yeah, deadly fireflies."

Finn maneuvered the vehicle down about fifty meters from the shot point, parking behind one of the stunted trees, hoping the wasps hadn't spotted them.

For a moment the three skitterbuggers sat motionless, steeling themselves for the dangerous task.

Finally, Gent depressed the button on the fuse, activating the ten-minute countdown. "Let's go," he whispered, cradling the canister and leading the way.

Shig and Finn followed, each wearing a CO<sub>2</sub> backpack as a weapon. They were within five meters of the hole before the first guard sensed them and swooped to attack. They dodged the diving wasp and hurried to the hole.

At the caved-in shot point, Gent picked up a loading rod. He pulled back the spring device, attached the canister, and jammed it into the hole. Releasing the spring, Gent propelled the CO<sub>2</sub> bomb down the shot hole.

Two wasps dove in tandem.

Shig sprayed them both, spotting a movement from the corner of his eye. "Finn, behind you!" Finn twisted and fired as the creature swerved away. Another guard swooped in low at knee level and disappeared in a cloud of icy smoke from the CO<sub>2</sub> gun.

The night was lit brighter than day by the wasp guards.

"Let's get," Gent said. "The hole is loaded," He glanced at his watch, "and

will blow in eight minutes." They turned and started running for the skimmer fifty meters away.

Finn felt a sledgehammer slam into his back just below his backpack. Out of breath, he sagged to his knees. Pain — his back was on fire. His vision blurred as he gasped for air. He blinked, fighting down the nausea . . .

Gent had caught up and quickly removed Finn's backpack. Shig fired short bursts of CO<sub>2</sub> over their heads, keeping the wasps at bay. Finn blinked and squinted at his watch. Time was running out.

"Okay, pal." Gent had draped one of Finn's arms over his shoulder. Together they struggled to the skimmer. Gent spread Finn out and started the engine.

Shig, bent over Finn, looked up and shouted, "Look out, Gent!" The big man fired and hit an attacking wasp at the last second. Droplets of condensed yellow mist splattered over the skitterbuggers.

As the skimmer rose into the air, Finn's thoughts swirled, the pain overwhelming him. Time had run out. The explosion was muffled, but Finn felt the shock wave, and the blast of cool night air revived him.

"You'll be okay," Shig said, holding up the empty syringe, "in a few minutes."

Finn nodded his gratitude, already feeling drowsy. He stared back at the shot point, a strange sensation in his head — almost like a tuning fork vibrating inside his skull . . .

*The Horde was hurt badly, dissolving. The Song of Suffering vibrated weakly. The great Queen Mother felt despair. She called on instinct to save the remnants of the once mighty Horde. The ancient time . . . the time of many hordes . . . the time of growth and split . . . the time when the Queen Mother had been a new one, leaving her old horde . . . Swarm! It was a song she had almost forgotten: The Song to Swarm. She vibrated, and the Horde shared the feeling of hope. Swarm, and away . . .*

The hum diminished. Finn saw the shot point erupt like a volcano, spewing a great ball of glowing mist, hurtling it starward. The ball was shaped like a shuttlecraft, outdistancing a few trailing luminous specks — individual wasps — leaving them in its wake. Those left flared briefly, then snuffed out.

The shape of the swarm reminded Finn of the old Earth marine mammal —whale! Watching the mist wasp swarm disappear, Finn wondered where their queen would lead them? To the stars? To where the whales had gone?

"Good luck," he murmured, suddenly feeling weary. He closed his eyes as the skimmer sped to the safety of the base camp.

(Editor's note: Fiction sometimes makes a good background for gaming, and so it is with "Skitterbugging," the story you just read. We asked Steve Winter, an editor for the design and development branch of TSR Hobbies, Inc., and an authority on the Traveller game system, to translate the characters, creatures, and equipment from Gene O'Neill's story into Traveller terms. So you want to be a skitterbugger? Take your pick....)

The skitterbuggers, members of an astro-geophysical survey team, don't fit into any one Traveller profession. They probably work for a branch of the Scout Service, but any GMs wanting to use them in a campaign will have to design their own service tables.

# Translating skitterbuggers into Traveller

by Steve Winter



FINN M'CORMAC

## Crew members

### Finn M'Cormac

778978 Age 26 2 terms  
Air/raft-1, Electronics-1, Liaison-1, Jack-o-Trades-1



MIKELA LUCCHESI

### Gent Jackson

978785 Age 30 3 terms  
Carousing-1, Electronics-1 Mechanical-3, Streetwise-1



GENT JACKSON

### Mikela Lucchesi

6789A8 Age 30 3 terms  
Air/raft-1, Electronics-2, Leader-1, Prospecting-1  
Psionics: level 7 telepath



SHIGAWARO KENJO

### Shigawaro Kenjo

898787 Age 26 2 terms  
Brawling-2, Demolitions-1

## Supporting cast

**The All-American Boy** is a light work robot built on a type II chassis with legs. Its sensors approximate human senses, and include a short-range communicator and voice simulator. It has two light work arms capable of lifting 5 kg each. Its brain (tech level 14) is programmed with the equivalent of Electronics-1 Mechanical-1 and Valet-1. Retail price is kCr 515.

The skitterbuggers had some interesting items of equipment:

**CO<sub>2</sub> backpack:** 3 kg, 20 shots, Cr 100 (Cr 10 to recharge); tech level 8. This is a backpack fire extinguisher, effective against electrical and most chemical fires.

**CO<sub>2</sub> bomb:** 5 kg, Cr 500, tech level 8. Under normal conditions, these are useful only for putting out fires. If one is set off near a creature, treat it as a tech level 9 hand grenade.

**Healjell:** Can be smeared on small wounds to anesthetize and disinfect. It also contains jellied Medical Slow drug to accelerate healing. The wound will undergo 15 days of healing in 24 hours. A second dose must be applied if further healing is required. Tech level 9; Cr 150/dose; Availability 7+.

**Mist wasps** are hive creatures. While in the hive, all the wasps merge into one amorphous creature. One cubic meter of this hive "plasma" can divide into about 40 wasps. Only the queen mother does not blend completely into the hive; it is a true individual with initiative and independent thought.

The queen mother is a level 5 telepath. All other mist wasps are level 2 telepaths. When linked with its hive, the queen mother has an almost unlimited supply of psionic strength points.

Attacking mist wasps heat themselves to a temperature of about 250° C (430° F.). They attack from short range and cause 2D damage when they hit. An attack will hit on a roll of 5+, with the following DMs: nothing/jack -0, mesh -1, cloth/reflec -3, ablat/battle -5, evading -1, -Brawling skill.

Only extreme cold will affect a mist wasp. A shot of compressed CO<sub>2</sub>, compressed oxygen or any other extremely cold gas will kill one on a roll of 5+ (use the Group Hits by Shotguns rule). A slightly cold object, like a pitcher of ice water, will drive one away on a roll of 8+.

If faced with extinction, mist wasps can cross interstellar space at a speed of about one parsec every 50 years. They will settle only on very old, geologically stable worlds.

# Exonidas Spaceport



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# Exonidas Spaceport

## A Traveller™ adventure

No spaceport can ever be said to be typical; these facilities have more individuality than many cities. When spaceports are under consideration, however, Exonidas Spaceport on the planet Horltheur is among the better examples of a well-planned port adapting to unusual circumstances.

Horltheur is the third planet of the main-sequence star Taledde, a rather ordinary star of spectral class G3. (For a graphic display of the system, see Figure 4 on page 41.) Of the seven planets and many asteroids orbiting Taledde, only Horltheur is extensively settled. Coad, its satellite, boasts a significant base, however, and Donade and Corrade, two Mars-like planets in an outer orbit, have permanent scientific colonies. There is a technologically advanced mining colony about the gas giant Colosse that slings compressed liquid hydrogen toward Horltheur. The Lesser Ring, similar to the asteroid belt of Sol's system but slightly less dense, also is host to several standing colonies.

Horltheur is a world of average size, composition, atmosphere, and hydrographic percentage. It has good deposits of most strategic minerals, and its indigenous life is richly varied, with beasts, birds, and sea creatures in orders of complexity up to, but not including, true intelligence.

The UPP of A-866A78-F applies to Horla, the smaller of the world's two major continents. The other continent, Theury, can best be described by the UPP of D-866500-0, having recently undergone a cataclysmic war.

By the time the planet's technology had advanced to the point where it could destroy itself, each of the two continents had fragmented into opposing nations with conflicting ideals. The crusading spirit rose, and nations tried to impose their solutions upon their neighbors. Each of the Theuran nations was jealous and proud of its sovereign status, unwilling to unite; ultimately, they all found equality in annihilation.

Destroyed along with every important

city on the continent was the Tatheur Great Port, a spaceport that was essentially the property of the interstellar government (as is Exonidas); the loss was resented, to say the least, by the government's leaders.

Horla continent escaped untouched by the weapons of the short but deadly war. Its fifteen nations were shocked into dropping their own squabbles by what they monitored as it took place across the ocean. Right after the war all progress, all business, all activity, on both the ruined continent and the still-rich one, stopped. The world was numbed by the disaster. Those in power knew that the full effects of the war were yet to be felt. Within a couple of days, the realization came that three billion people had died, and tens of millions more were destined to die as well unless a quick and efficient rescue effort was mounted.

Into this hushed atmosphere came a great fleet: one of the interstellar government's first-line Battleships, along with enough support craft to take on an empire. The fleet was led by Grand Admiral Jennifer de la Noue. First on her agenda: Rescue the people who could be rescued, and save what could be saved. Second was the laying of blame, and third the job of determining what changes needed to be made to punish those at fault and prevent a recurrence of this disaster.

With her was Adrian Redmond of the interstellar government's Department of Commerce, aboard an electromagnetic effects and communications ship that was a flying switchboard of tremendous capacity. His job was to find a way to restore the economy of a world more than half destroyed.

Directly on the site of the ruined capital city of Tatheur, one of the Theury nations now dead, de la Noue's fleet set up Emergency City, a class D spaceport, to aid survivors and treat the wounded.

On the continent of Horla lies the nation named Dirla, and within that the city of Exonidas, Dirla's capital. The most populous of the fifteen Horlan nations,

Dirla wears its great city (pop. 950,000) like a crown. Now, With Theury continent dead, Exonidas, with its huge spaceport, is the biggest city on the planet; the port is (by default) the center of all off-planet activity of any importance.

Lying at the northern end of a long bay on the Sea of Lamps, Exonidas Spaceport is actually the land-bound half of a two-element port facility. The other half is an orbiting structure whose path keeps it always over the longitude of Exonidas City. Twice each planetary day, the High Port is directly above the Down Port. The orbit, at a constant altitude of 38,500 kilometers, pulls the High Port around the world at a velocity of 3.3 kilometers per second. The same orbit is a convenient parking spot for cargo and for ships. This is the orbit that the fleet in presence now occupies,

### FIGURE 1: EXONIDAS DOWN PORT

**A: Spaceport Terminal.** See Figure 2 for detailed description.

**B: Main Boost-Grid.** The boost-grid is the heart of any spaceport with the technological base to support one. At older ports, ships must land under their own power, relying upon pilot expertise to avoid mid-air collisions or dangerously clumsy setdowns. Here, the boost-grid can reach out with gravitic force and either ease a ship to its landing pad or boost a ship from the ground into orbit. Using power from the main city power reactor (not in area of map), the boost-grid can focus gravitic energy with micrometer precision.

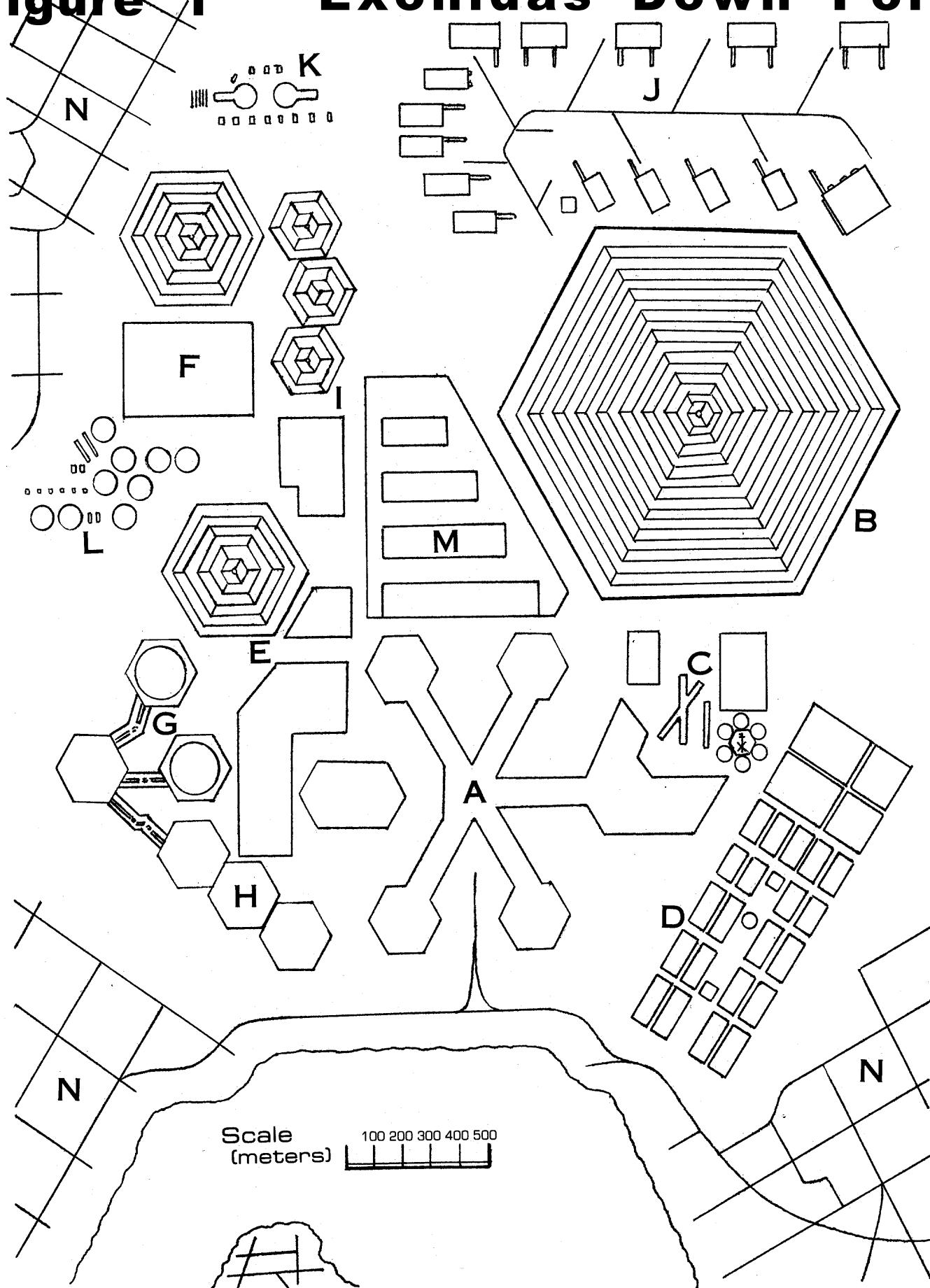
The grid is composed of tungsten-steel rails 10 cm wide, set into the flat surface of the landing field in a precisely defined pattern. The energy conducted along these rails is perfectly controlled by the main computers in the Port Authority building.

Any ship of up to 7,500 tons that is capable of landing on the field can be lifted up into high orbit, or can be brought down out of orbit and landed gently on the field. The point of focus can be moved by computer control in such a way as to take hold of objects as far as sixty degrees from the vertical line through the center of the grid; the range, or effective "reach," is 50,000 kilometers.

The main advantage of the boost-grid is that the ship being boosted into orbit has no need to use its own drives, or

# by Jeff Swycaffer

# Figure 1 Exonidas Down Port



indeed even to have a working drive. The grid can, for instance, boost prefabricated sections of a larger ship up into orbit to be assembled in weightlessness. In general, the grid is used to lower shuttles and small spacecraft that nevertheless do have a backup drive for use in case of grid failure. The boosting and lowering of cargo and passenger containers without drives is not considered safe enough to justify the economy of such a measure.

The fuel saved by a ship using the grid instead of its own thrusters is on the order of one ton of fuel times the ship's drive number times the ship's mass in kilotons (but always a minimum savings due to use of the grid of one ton of fuel). Thus, a 5,000-ton ship using 2G drive to escape the world's gravity would use ten tons of fuel, which could be saved by use of the boost-grid.

The grid has 100 channels, meaning that up to 100 ships can be simultaneously handled by the grid, so long as the total tonnage being boosted does not exceed 7,500 tons. This multi-channel capacity helps cut down the average waiting time for use of the grid.

The procedure for a small ship — a Scout, for example—taking off from the grid would be as follows: After final approval for takeoff is received from the Port Authority computers, the ship, under its own power, flies up from its current docking bay (location M, see text below) until it is within the cone of the grid's effectiveness. At an altitude of about thirty meters, the gravitic focus of the boost-grid is aligned upon the ship, and a gentle force begins to push it away from the planet, while the ship's own maneuver drives are throttled back to an "idle" setting. The grid has the precision to release the ship either into an escape orbit, any of a number of closed orbits, or exactly into the orbit of the High Port. For more on the High Port and its own boost-grids, see below.

**C: Airport and Heliport.** This all-in-one transportation center has an international airport, a national heliport, a train station and a subway terminal.

**D: Headquarters and home location of the 119th Heavy Marine Division.** This division is a regular unit in the military of the interstellar government, and is based here with the permission of the Dirlan nation. Although Dirla is the host nation to the Exonidas Spaceport, the port area itself is considered to be legally a part of the interstellar government. Relations are cordial, and the right to base the division here was freely given by the Dirlan government. The 119th supplies the spaceport with security personnel and can provide riot-control troops if needed. At this time, only one of the division's four regiments is based here; the other three are working to clean up the disorder on Theury continent.

#### **E: Naval Base with military boost-grid.**

This smaller but stronger grid is run off an independent power supply, as are all of the military installations at the spaceport. This grid also has 100 channels, and can boost loads totaling 10,000 tons at one time; despite this, the military commander here prefers to, purchase power from the city and use the larger, public grid in Peacetime, because of the greater computer power (hence, less chance of a crash) available to the civilian authority.

#### **F: Scout Base with military boost-grid.**

This grid is identical to the Navy's grid. Normally, a force of 30 Scouts is based here, most of which would be in high orbit at any given time. Currently, due to the attention being paid this planet in its unusual circumstances, 48 more Scouts are attached to the fleet in orbit; this base supplies their needs as well.

**G: Energy reactor.** This reactor supplies emergency power to the entire spaceport, and all power for the military bases.

**H: Fuel storage.** Most of the fuel for planet-based energy production comes from the system's gas giant, Colosse. It is skimmed, refined, and compressed in facilities in orbit about the gas giant, then shipped toward Horltheur in huge, free-falling fuel canisters. At the High Port, this fuel is pumped into great fuel tankers which are lowered by the boost-grid to the surface to be unloaded. The overall benefit seems marginal: roughly a thirty-five per cent savings in fuel, considering what is gained and what is used to get it into storage. But multiplied by the thousands of ships and tens of thousands of cargo shuttles that yearly visit the port, the savings are substantial.

**I: Fighter Base.** While most of the in-system Fighter strength is based at the High Port, this base has a portion of the spaceworthy Fighters and is also an Aircraft base. Currently, 200 Fighters and 700 Aircraft are based here. While spaceworthy Fighters must be made to maneuver in vacuum, and to operate as well in any atmosphere, aircraft, specifically high-performance jets, can be tailored to the planet's air. The result is that many Aircraft can outfight Fighters as long as the battle is limited to the lower atmosphere. This base was built with that fact well in mind.

**J: Construction Yards.** The yards here, with direct access onto the landing field and boost-grid, have a total construction capacity of 6.8 million tons, limited primarily by the boost-grid's capacity of 7,500 tons. The yards are generally involved with building Scouts, Merchants, and Colonial Cruisers for resale; larger ships are not generally under construction at any given time.

**K and L: Planetary Defense Sites.** The batteries of heavy lasers and rapid-fire missile launchers based here are situated in heavily armored combat wells.

The city has many other such sites.

**M: Hangars and Storage.** The hangars have the capacity to house two million tons of spacecraft and shuttles, plus eight million tons of cargo.

**N: Exonidas City.** The city, its population temporarily (at least) swelled to more than one million by the influx of refugees, soldiers, and fortune seekers wrought by the war, is a nexus for communication and transportation of all types; phones, electricity, and broadcasting facilities are among its strong points, as are all modes of ground, air, sea, and space transport.

#### **FIGURE 2: SPACEPORT TERMINAL**

Although Figure 2 (facing page) only shows one level of the five-level building, the levels are all laid out in similar fashion. Level 4 is the highest-class, with the most expensive shops and most competent businesses. (This is not to say that Level 1, with the most approachable and inexpensive places of business, is "low class." Far from it.)

In Figure 2, general areas of interest are labeled with letters, followed by a number which designates the level, unless all levels are laid out similarly with respect to the function, in which case the suffix "-all" is appended. Specific offices, shops, or other items of interest will be labeled with a number for reference, and a number to show the level. (See also Figure 8: A typical office suite.)

**A-1: Main Entrance.** The road loops close to the entrance, with automatic parking service in nearby underground garages.

**B-1: Terminal services and customer service counters.** Ticketing and weigh-in is handled here.

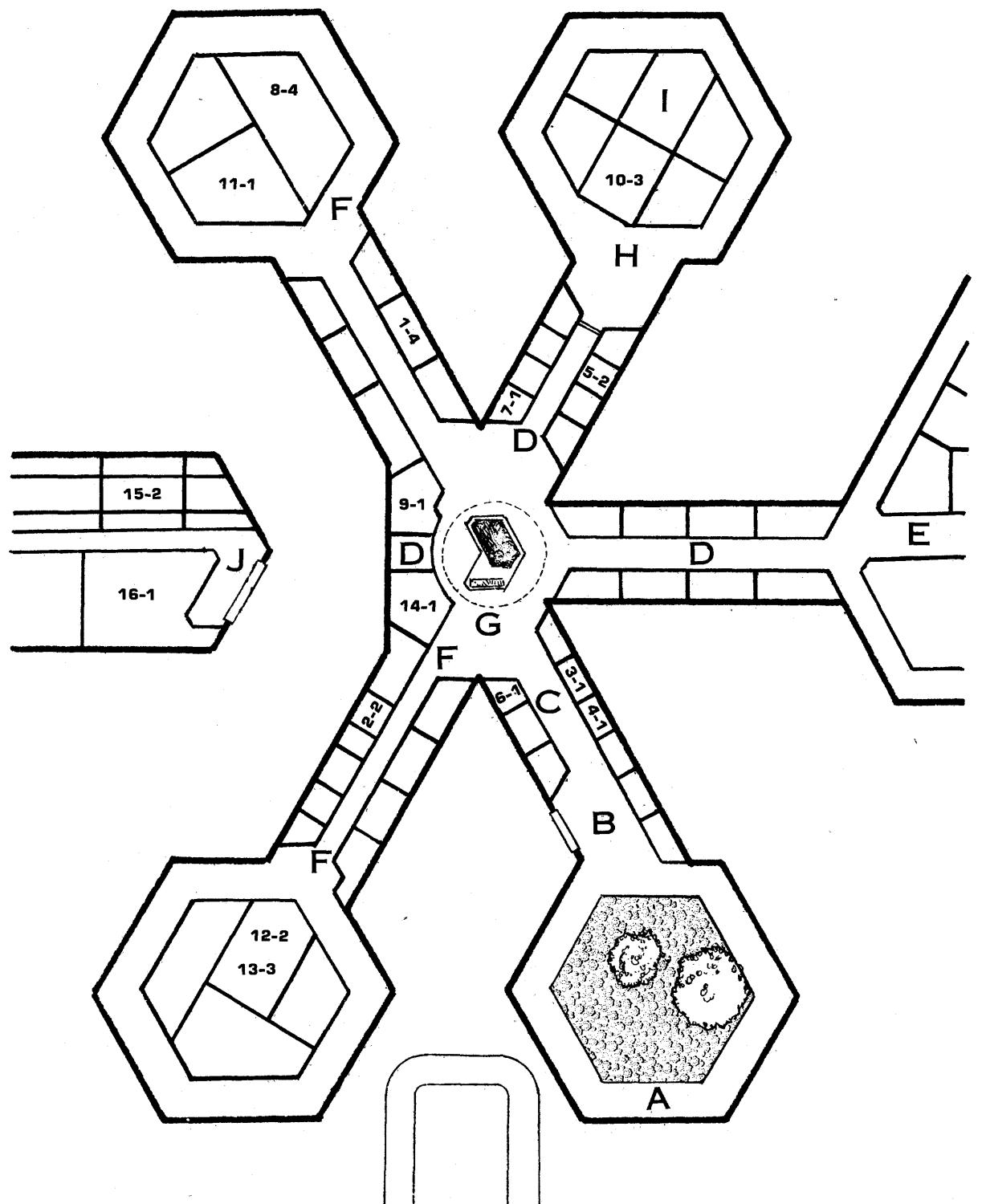
**C-1: Portmaster's Representative.** In effect, a high-class advertising agency for the interstellar government. Maps, insurance, and miscellaneous services can be had here.

Currently working out of this office, using a false name and papers, is Inspector General Robert Lawrence of the Interstellar Port Authority. His mission is to investigate the feasibility of ending the planet's political independence by absorbing it into the domain of the interstellar government.

**D-all: Shops.** Always within easy walking distance in these areas are restaurants, gift shops, services (barbers, information booths, rest rooms), luggage, clothiers, jewelers and watchmakers, pharmacies, travel agencies, stores for sporting goods and supplies, military recruiting offices, and a large establishment belonging to the Travellers' Aid Society. Several individual shops will be described below. See also the note on area F below for details on room layouts.

**E-1: The International Airport.** This is one section of the transportation complex described in area C on Figure 1.

# Figure 2 Spaceport Terminal



Scale  
(meters)

50 100 150 200 250

Activity in this area of the complex is much less than normal, now with far fewer travel sites left on the planet.

**F-all: Businesses and Offices.** Shipping brokers in abundance operate here, as do resale brokers, importers, manufacturers, shipping line headquarters, and mercantile guilds.

Note: the divisions and lines shown on the map are those between larger sections of rooms; the walls portrayed are the permanent, load-bearing walls. Each of the "rooms" shown in Figure 2 is actually a suite of rooms or shops. The average business-office suite will be of this configuration: Entrance is through a large, lockable plate-glass door, either a swinging or a sliding type. Reception areas, work areas, and conference cubicles might be separated by small, flimsy screens, while file rooms, computer rooms, and meeting rooms might be separated by more permanent walls (which do not show on the floor plan). The floors are quite thick, made of permanent and reinforced with structural steel. The ceilings, however, are often mere panels of decorative material at a height of 2½ to 3 meters, somewhat lower than the full 4-meter height of the main ceiling that is the floor of the next higher level. The hollow space between the ceilings is often filled with piping, wiring, and air-conditioning conduits.

(Several years ago, noted criminal Echel Anstove escaped capture by crawling through such a space with enough silence and dexterity to avoid his pursuit. The feat was unknowingly duplicated by the then-hunted Navy Captain Athalos Steldan on the world Chirkun.)

**G-all: Open Area.** On the second through fifth levels, the area inside the circle of dashes is open to the first level. On the first level is a planted area, styled as an indoor garden.

**H-1: Security Gate.** Tended at all times by a small but efficient 119th Division Marine detachment, this gate has a very secure weapons detector.

**I-all: Observation Area.** On the first level, this is an open waiting area where passengers prepare for imminent departure. On higher levels this area is an extension of the shopping promenade, with an observation deck overlooking the boost-grid.

**J-1-3: Port Authority Building.** Spaceport Authority Kevin Munrow, and his flight controllers, computers, radio traffic controllers, and other staff are here.

The Port Authority (or, technically, Commissioner of the Port) is a member of the Commerce Department, and therefore subordinate to Adrian Redmond. From working with the local planetary authorities as long as he has, Portmaster Munrow has developed a great deal of respect for Dirlan policies. He does not favor forcing the world into subservience to the interstellar government.

The Port Authority computers are roughly equivalent to three model/g-fib computers; their main purpose is to maintain a clear and free airspace.

**Area 1-4:** The offices of Dentos, Cahn, and Cahn, shipping and resale brokers. For *Traveller* purposes this is a +4 broker. Approaching a clerk of this office with even a hint of an unsavory or illegal deal is to invite immediate report and arrest. The brokers here have an almost uncanny reputation for being unbribable, incorruptible, and, in business dealings, savage.

**Area 2-2:** S. Grimaldi, shipping and resale broker. Equal to a +3 broker. Criminals might find a warmer reception here than at Dentos, Cahn, and Cahn, but be warned: S. Grimaldi will play both sides of any fence. If reselling hot cargo turns out to be unprofitable, blackmailing the seller might not be.

Scattered throughout the terminal are +2 and +1 brokers of any stripe, from struggling and honest to filthy rich and totally criminal.

**Area 3-1:** In a visible spot stands the recruiting booth of the Turga Lancers, a mercenary regiment active on this world. The Lancers are carving out a fledgling empire in the ruins of Theury continent, across the ocean; the appeal of so much untenanted real estate was too much to be resisted. As much as the interstellar government and the Portmaster resent such an operation, no laws are being violated, and thus Commissioner Munrow is unable to legally evict the Lancers' recruiters.

**Area 4-1:** Drake's Slashers, another mercenary regiment, has a recruiting booth here. The Slashers, unlike the Turga Lancers, are building their empire on a foundation of good will. Where the Lancers, a heliborne unit, are conquering wherever they can, the Slashers, a heavy armor unit, have mobilized in what is basically a rescue mission, bringing food, supplies, medicines and medical aid, and most importantly order, to the survivors of the war on Theury. In exchange for the relief the Slashers bring, the survivors are all too glad to legally cede great estates of land that are currently useless to them in any case. Whether or not these contracts bear the force of law is an issue the Slashers feel will be decided in their favor by their prowling hovertanks.

See Figure 9 (on page 48) for the current zones of operation of these and other military units.

**Area 5-2:** Hansen's Supplies Store. Respirator helmets, air tanks, filters, masks, and all other manner of survival gear is for sale here. Atmosphere testers and fallout detectors are popular items these days. The Theury war was fought with heavy, high-explosive warheads, very few of which were thermonuclear.

Thus, fallout over Horla continent has not been, and will not be, severe. Radiation testers are popular items nevertheless, and public awareness of health hazards is high.

**Area 6-1:** Navy, Army, and Marine recruiting. Situated near the Portmaster's representative, this is the sanctioned recruiting effort of the interstellar government. Policy dictates that recruits be trained on a planet other than their home world, but in this time of troubles, few recruits care to leave home. Even in spite of this, the station is pulling in its quota of man and womanpower.

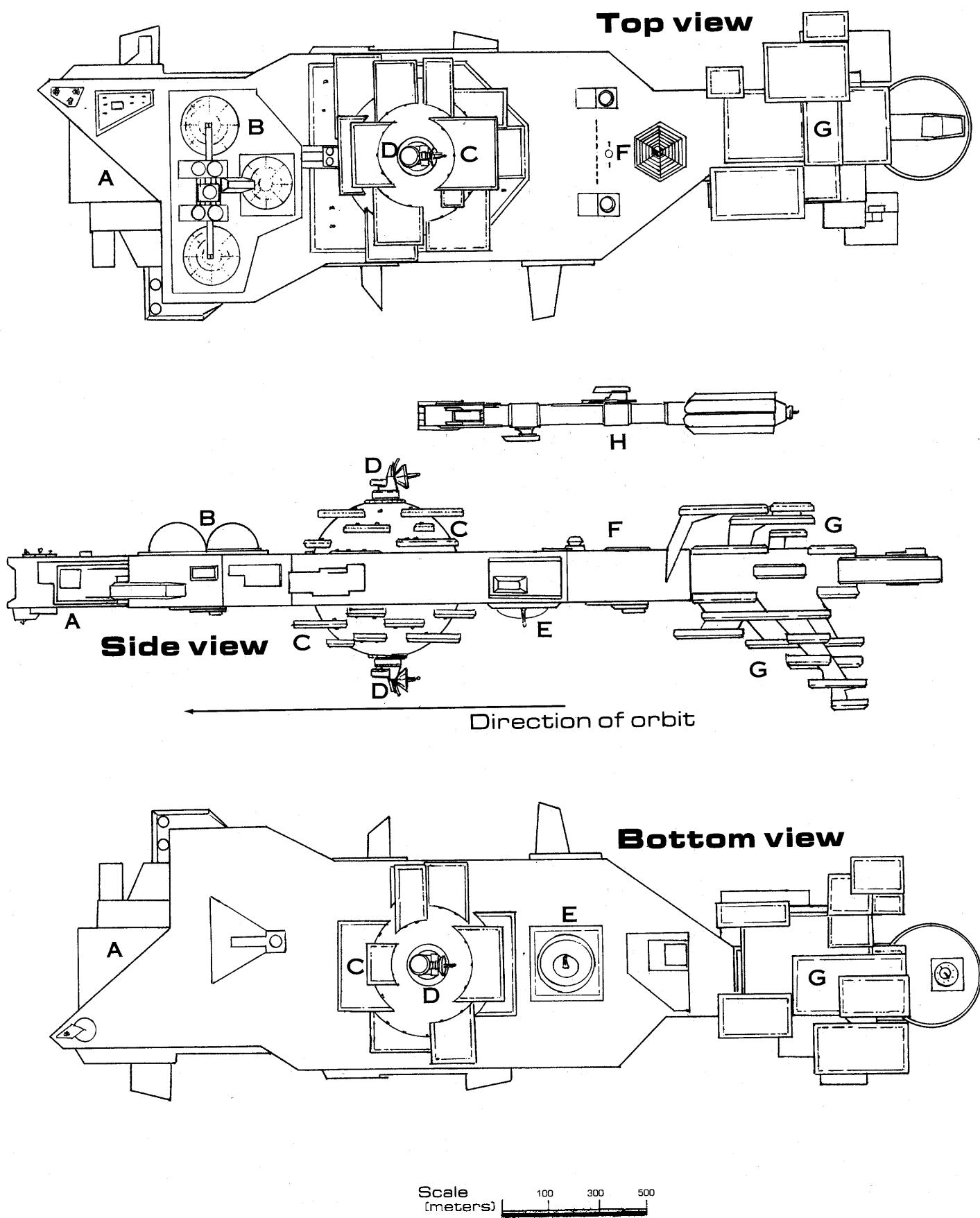
**Area 7-1:** Bank of Exonidas. An interstellar exchange bank, fully integrated with the computers that run banking throughout the sector, the Bank of Exonidas can convert currency, make loans, prepare stock portfolios, collect forfeitures, and in general take care of just about any financial needs of travellers and businessmen. The bank is protected by a system similar to a spaceship's anti-hijack program; further, at any given time there will be two Marines of the 119th keeping a somewhat alert eye on the doorway.

**Area 8-4:** Wrokla's Port Best. This restaurant is an offshoot of Wrokla's Downtown, which itself makes a plausible claim to be the best restaurant in the city. Although this place endeavors to cater to the better class of people, it is managed by a man, Hill Darsen, who knows that most spaceport travellers are not rich. Thus, to avoid a very unpleasant meal, a diner intending to patronize this spot must have a minimum social level of 9. This is better than Wrokla's Downtown, where even to be admitted to the foyer requires a social level of 11. A meal here for two, including tipping and other required gratuities, will cost upwards of 100 credits.

**Area 9-1:** Traveller's Aid Society Outpost. The main Traveller's Aid Society station was destroyed with Tatheur Spaceport in the war. The station here is working hard to gain the rich reputation the Theuran station once enjoyed.

Twice-hourly tram service is made available to the better hotels in the city, for those who are staying for some time; for the casual passenger, stopping here only for a connection, good-quality meals are dispensed, and a waiting lounge is provided away from the noise of normal traffic. A travel agency is based here, staffed by experts who are easily capable of helping travellers schedule their routes most efficiently. Ticketing can be prearranged here also, as can luggage check-through and most passport requirements.

Although the Traveller's Aid Society deals mostly with members of the Society, non-members may benefit from the services offered, at prices that are actually reasonable. How the higher-ups of the

**Figure 3****Exonidas High Port**

Society can consistently manage to bring good to excellent services to the public at comfortable prices has ever been a mystery; the policy is very well received.

**Area 10-3:** Susato, Morely, and Dowland Legal Services. This law office, recuperating from an unfortunate incident in which a live grenade was tossed through the doors, is perhaps the planet's leading firm for dealings in interstellar law. Local law and criminal law cases will also be handled by the firm.

**Area 11-1:** The Brass Beast. A wood-paneled alehouse with a low ceiling, reproducing the popular image of a rowdy hotspot of an era long past. Few things in the "inn" are beyond tech level 2, and the things that are — the soundproofing, the beer coolers, and the splat-gun hidden beneath the bar — are well out of sight. Managed with precise absurdity by a well trained pair of anachronists, the spot's rare dull moments are relieved by staged fights between trained duelists, whose choreographed swordfights take them from the fireplace to the kitchen and back, noisily but with no damage done.

**Area 12-2:** Offices of Birkenlines Interstellar Shipping. Characters seeking employment will find it at the following probabilities: Roll two six-sided dice. If the result listed below is achieved, employment is offered immediately. If the result is one or two less than the minimum needed, employment will be available in that many months. Required rolls are: Pilot 7+; Navigator 7+; Engineer 6+; Steward 6+; Medic 8+; Gunner 9+. Die Modifiers: +1 for every level of expertise above level 1.

In general, when using the above method of hiring on, the higher the two-dice roll, the better the position obtained. For example, a roll of 7 for a pilot hiring on might land him or her the position of backup pilot for a Subsidized Trader, while a roll of 16 (assuming the pilot had at least Pilot-5 skill) might mean the job of chief pilot for a large luxury liner. As always, the referee may choose to moderate these results.

**Area 13-3:** Pilots' lounge. A private and secluded gathering spot for pilots and navigators, where a quiet atmosphere is carefully cultivated. A discreet player character, having either pilot or navigator skill, can sometimes find rumors here — rumors of the most productive and rewarding sort. Too many people have the notion that a pilot is no more than a chauffeur, with no considerations beyond the comfort of his or her passengers. But pilots are more than this, and the popular illusion is resented. Who has the best view of the planet during terminal approach? The pilot. Whose life depends upon keeping two eyes always carefully open? The pilot. Whose job is it to know exactly where he or she is at any moment? The navigator . . .

"You may not have noticed, but the last ship that left, just as we were coming in, was in a tearing hurry, and his identification transponders weren't working." Who but a pilot would have noticed?

**Area 14-1:** First aid station. Treatment is available here for the many little things that plague travellers: nausea, overstress, headaches, and so on.

**Area 15-2:** Port Hospital. For things that no first aid station can be expected to handle. Excellent medical care is dispensed here by trained Naval medical personnel. The fact that the medics here are acting in an official capacity means that if a character comes in suffering from bullet wounds, for example, the fact will be reported, and the character will likely be interviewed by the police, or by port officials. Given a choice between crawling off somewhere to die and giving oneself up in order to receive treatment, most people will choose the latter course. Some, however, will try to reach a civilian hospital away from the spaceport to minimize the ramifications. Some people even know of outlaw doctors in the city who work for organized crime.

The port hospital has a special area staffed with experts on burn medicine, a necessary specialization considering how flammable spaceship fuel is. Currently this department is desperately understaffed, since all doctors and medics having any expertise in burn treatment are working desperately at Emergency City to save survivors of the war.

**Area 16-1:** Computer and traffic control center. Here the massive computers control the multi-channelled boost-grid. The machines are constantly alert for fluctuations in the titanic gravitic forces constantly being re-focused. There is a human backup for any computer system, for the very good reason that machine failures are always possible. Safety is uppermost in the minds of the area's personnel, and the first consideration of the computers' programming.

### FIGURE 3: EXONIDAS HIGH PORT

The High Port is a 100-million-ton facility quite removed in structure from any spaceship. Despite this, it can be described in the terms of *Traveller Book 5, 1980* edition, as follows:

100,000,000 tons  
SW-Z400GJ4-00000Z-00000-L  
Batteries 2  
TL=15  
Crew = 1400  
Fuel tankage = 10,000,000 tons

More than anything else, the High Port is an orbiting fuel tank where ships can refuel before Jump, without having to carry that fuel down to the planet and back up. Since Jump fuel usually composes a sizable percentage of a ship's mass, the overall savings are significant.

**A: Accelerator Terminus.** This facility sends unmanned cargo containers at high velocity outward into minimum-energy transfer orbits, providing the main source of supplies and expendables for the five major bases in the system other than Horltheur itself.

**B: Fuel Storage and Power Plant.** Fuel coming in from the gas giant Colosse is held here for eventual transshipment to Horltheur, for use in refueling ships before their departure from the system. The fuel is sent from Colosse to the High Port in great, unmanned cannisters which are then grappled by the High Port's gravitic boost-grids and unloaded.

**C: Main Port Building.** Located here are the offices and apartments of the many permanent residents of the High Port. The platforms extending from the central sphere are landing decks for such ships that can land; these decks are oriented by small gravitic generators, so that small ships landing on any of the many platforms are held firmly "down" toward the main body of the port with an even 1 G acceleration. Ships that cannot be landed on a planet likewise cannot be landed on these platforms. However, several of the platforms are landing-shuttle bases, with a quick enough cycle of takeoffs and landings to comfortably ferry the passengers and cargo of, for instance, a Liner, to the world below with minimal delay. The main port facility here has no shopping complex, and very little hotel space; the High Port is primarily a working port.

Some of the facilities to be found in the Main Port Building; but not shown individually on the map, are:

**C-1 The Manufacturing Alley.** Here, in an area of zero gravity, with industrial quality vacuum readily to hand, high-tech manufacturing concerns have based themselves, to manufacture and build everything from ball bearings to precision microelectronics to made-to-order microorganisms.

Although the High Port is, legally, entirely the property of the interstellar government, it has been judged wise to rent manufacturing space to the corporations of the planet below. The result is a profit for everyone. The companies renting space here are from everywhere on the planet, Horla and Theury alike. Since the major population centers of Theury continent are virtually dead, this now means that some 50% of Theury's wealth is tied up at the High Port, with the orbiting factories suddenly having become entire corporations, rather than just branch offices. The legal questions are still hanging over everyone's heads.

**C-2: The Portmaster's Assistant's Office.** Here, the Commissioner of the High Port, Donald Wensley, oversees the complex operations of the port. He checks all cargo handling, monitors traffic, and maintains law and order, and provides a

human backup for the all-important computers that control the smaller boost-grids. Fortunately for the irascible ex-Navy Pilot, he has a capable aide to handle public relations and to deal with complaints. Merely keeping the port operating smoothly takes up all of Wensley's time, and most of his temper.

C-3: Zero-Gravity Hospital. This has become the ideal place to treat burn victims, leprosy patients, and those suffering from damage to large muscles. Healing in zero-gravity is not much slower than healing on a planet's surface, and the absence of hampering gravity and weight is a godsend for suffering patients. It would be possible, using gravitic neutralizers, to construct a zero-G hospital or ward on the planet's surface, and for extreme emergencies this is indeed done. But the high cost of running such neutralizers makes the High Port's hospital a better investment.

At this time, the hospital is virtually overrun with burn victims from the warheads that fell on Theury continent just five weeks ago. It has been estimated that of all the people burned on that fiery day, less than five per cent ever received any treatment. Since burns, when left untreated, are more deadly than nearly any other injury, this means that about ninety per cent of those burned that day who might have been saved have already died. This is, of course, a drop in the bucket when compared to the 2.8 billion people who died within minutes of the falling of the first bombs.

C-4: The Research Alley. High-energy research in weightless conditions has been an ongoing concern of the High Port since its dedication. The sub-quantum labs here are most heavily involved with duplication of other labs' experiments, for validation purposes; little truly original research is done here. The same is true for the jump-technology labs and the meson-gun experimental station; testing the claims of more advanced research is the order of the day.

**D: Gravitic Boost-Grids.** Like the main boost-grid at the Down Port, these are used for the landings and takeoffs of spacecraft, and of the unmanned canisters that this port handles. Unlike the Down Port's, these grids are tightly focused by their dish antennae, have only one channel, and maneuver the point of focus by rotating and elevating of the dishes themselves.

These grids are distinctly less powerful than the main grid below, since there is no gravity to be overcome, and they have a more sharply limited range. Each of these grids can exert a push or pull of 100,000,000 Newtons — which means that a ship of 10,000 tons could be pushed or pulled at an acceleration of 1G, or a 1,000-ton ship at 10G. Since

there is no weight to work against, even a ship much larger than 10,000 tons can be pushed into place. . . slowly. Each grid's reach is 5,000 kilometers, with a sharp dropoff in power beyond that range. Like the main boost-grid at the Down Port, these grids are not limited to simple pushing or pulling in the straight line between them and their targets; transverse force can also be applied.

The operation of these smaller grids is as follows: A ship, either coming into the system from its in-jump or moving up from the planet below, passes at low velocity near the High Port. Guided by the gravitic equivalent of radar, whichever of the two grid-dishes is closer maneuvers itself until it points at the ship. Then (assuming the ship is to be docked at the High Port) the dish swings slowly about, towing the ship closer to the landing platforms at location C or location G (described below). As soon as the ship has been settled comfortably onto the platform, the dish swings back around to latch on to its next target. The same procedure is used for capturing the infrequent fuel canister shipments from Colosse; the canisters, massing 150,000 tons, once slowed, are maneuvered to location B.

These grids can be used for pushing objects away, as well as for pulling targets in; this explains the two batteries of Repulsors-Z listed in the USP above. Militarily, these are of questionable value in a fight, but the High Port was never designed as a fighting port.

**E: Solar Power Relay.** Aimed always at one of three receiving stations on the world below, this facility beams solar power that is collected from five large, sail-like reflective mirrors (not shown) in an orbit parallel to the High Port's.

**F: Weapons Station, and Scout and Fighter Base.** In truth, the High Port is not capable of defending itself. The heavy lasers and missile bays mounted here are a meager defense at best. The Scout and Fighter fleets based here go only so far to make up the gap. As just mentioned, the High Port was never designed with warfare in mind, at least not as a primary concern. This small installation is somewhat of an afterthought.

**G: Landing Platforms.** Similar to the platforms at C, above, these grids are used more for cargo than for passengers.

**H: The Battleship *Fair Phyllis*, for scale comparison.** Ships too big to be landed on either the planet or the platforms of the High Port can hang in orbit parallel to the port, tended by shuttles. This is how large ships are constructed; there is no "drydock" as such. When a ship too large to be handled by the Down Port is to be built, its pieces are boosted into the High Port's orbit and assembled. Indeed, this is how the High Port itself was built.

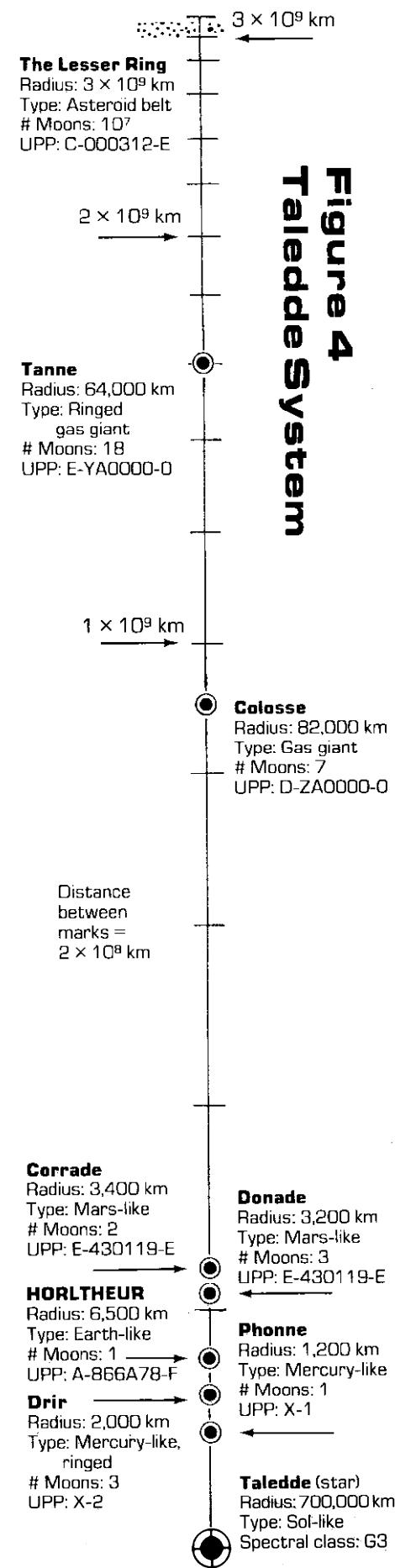
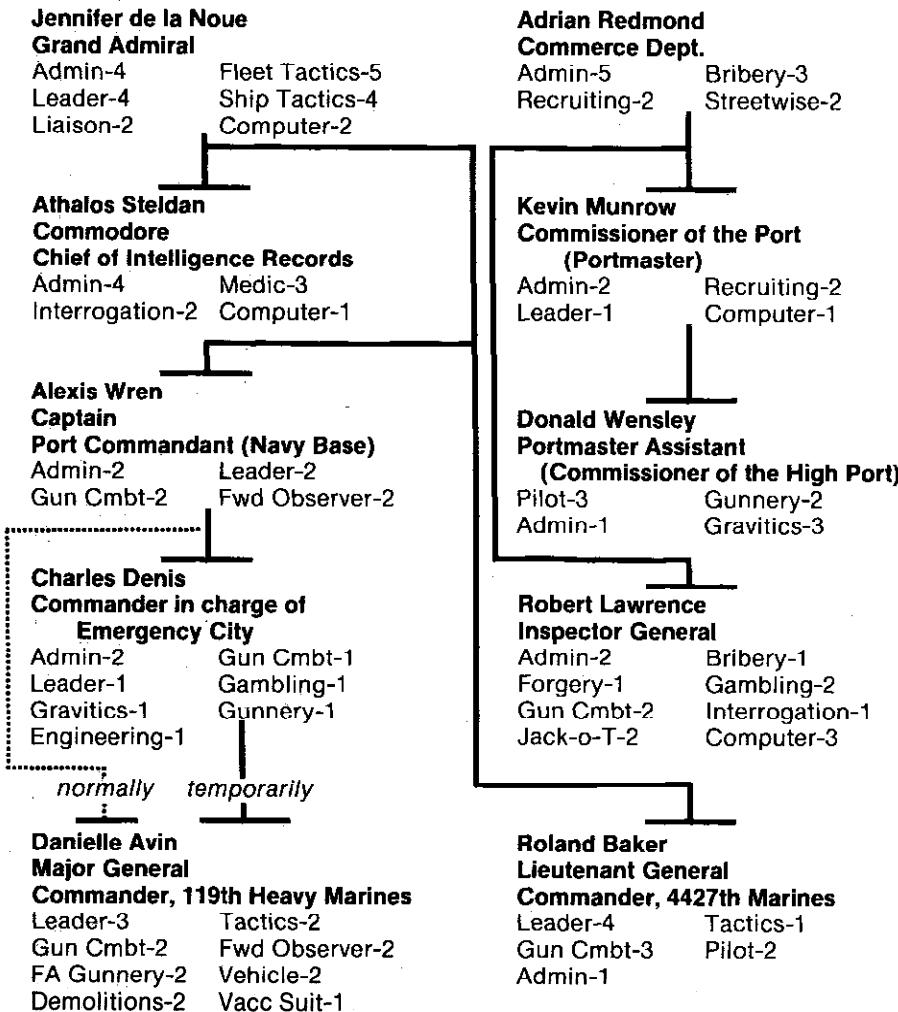


Figure 4  
Taledde System

## **Figure 5 Chain of command**



## Thumbnail sketches

## Grand Admiral Jennifer de la Noue

667BF9; age 42

The youngest-ever Grand Admiral of the Navy, de la Noue has risen to the top through the vacancies left by her superiors, who either died in the disaster at First Binary or were forced to resign after the cover-ups of Second Binary. De la Noue has survived primarily by being uncorrupt and 'incorruptible. She passed through the recent ethics investigations of the higher ranks with an absolutely untarnished record.

### Commodore Athalos Steldan

687BB9, age 38

Although Steldan has a slightly more scandalous service record than is usual for his rank, including one unprecedented case of flight from prosecution, the facts have always served to acquit him. He seems to attract misunderstandings from his superior, the Grand Admiral, in direct relation to his frequent — some would say regular — breakthroughs and successes in his field. If he appeared to have sparked the abortive mutiny of two years past, the fracas clearly revealed

the degree of danger in the old fleet organization. Steldan's greatest coup was to rescue Grand Admiral Rothar Sienna from six years' captivity, when all others thought the old war hero dead.

## Captain Alexis Wren

89A999, age 34

Of good record and unimpeachable reputation, Captain Wren's top achievement seems to be the remarkable speed with which he reacted to the Theuran war. By the time his orbital satellites warned him of the missiles, there was nothing he could do to prevent the death of a continent. Singlehandedly, however, he kept the war from crossing the sea to Horla continent. His Fighter command intercepted and destroyed the very few intercontinental missiles launched — which seemed to have been fired for no better reason than to leave no survivors at all, neutrals or not — and his desperate videophone diplomacy with the leaders of the Horlan nations quieted their fears thoroughly enough to prevent an outbreak on that continent.

**Commander Charles Denis**

9A88A9, age 34

Sent to Theury continent directly on the heels of the war, Commander Denis had the assignment directly from Captain Wren to bury the dead, treat the injured, aid the survivors, enforce order, put out the forest fires, and get food to the people starving in the hinterlands. That the commander has succeeded at all is amazing; that he has succeeded well is little short of miraculous. Working out of Emergency City, little more than a tent town built around a makeshift Type D Spaceport (See Figure 7), he has established a system of advance camps that distribute medical supplies, and has put people to other work than fighting.

## Major General Danielle Avin

B9D999, age 38

Using the mobile elements of the 119th Heavy Marines, she has stopped the outbreak of violence across the wastelands of Theory continent, sometimes without firing a shot. The interstellar Marines have long enjoyed a reputation for invincibility; no would-be bandit chieftain could stand against them, and few would try. General Avin leads her troops with a personal touch that is respected and admired, overseeing every aspect of the subdivisional operation with untiring attention. In areas she has pacified, no one has dared to renew the fighting.

**Lieutenant General Roland Baker**

687989, age 46

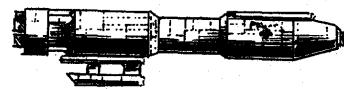
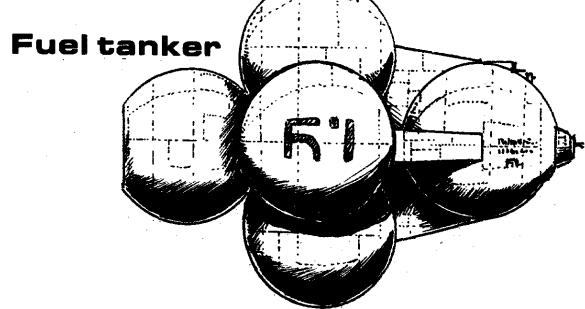
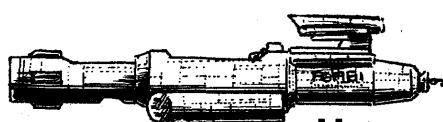
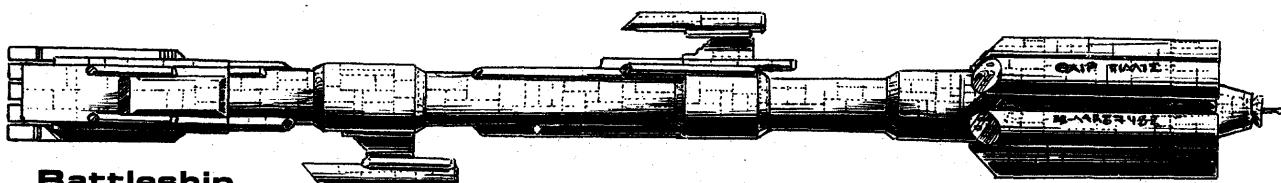
When the great battleship *Fair Phyllis* dropped out of jumpspace, the first people from its fleet to set foot on Horltheur were the 4427th Marines, and first among them was General Baker. This has been the first operation in the Division's history when the order of the day was to keep peace, suppress banditry, and help ferry casualties of someone else's war to safety. General Baker has adapted fairly well. Proud of being "a soldier, not a policeman," his operations have been perhaps carried out with too much of a show of strength. Advised by his staff against such overreactions as softening up target zones with artillery, air strikes, or orbital bombardment, he has swallowed his pride and proven himself quite a policeman indeed.

## Adrian Redmond

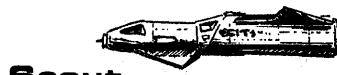
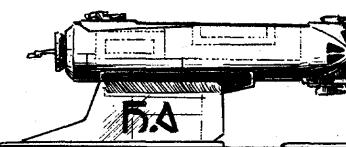
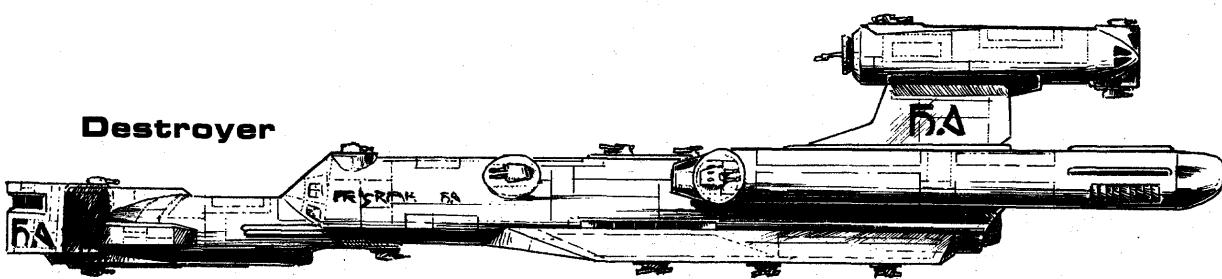
596DF9, age 50

Aboard his complex command post of a spaceship, Redmond is here as a representative of the Commerce Department of the interstellar government. Wars disrupt commerce almost as much as they disrupt human life; Redmond's job is to do what he can to restore economic order. The peculiarities of the world Horltheur — its independent status and fierce nationalistic pride, its high taxes and great armies — brought about a

# Figure 6 The Fleet in Presence



Scale (meters) 100 200 300 400 500



Scale (meters) 5 10

# Figure 6: The Fleet in Presence

## Battleship: *Fair Phyllis*

1,000,000 tons BB-Y3336J4-F09909-90009-W  
 Batteries bearing 400 100 400  
 Batteries 800 200 800

TL=15  
 Crew = 38,000  
 Agility = 3

## Heavy Cruisers: *Cator, Dynamme, Forodh, Horor, Interpe, Flamme*

75,000 tons CR-Q3336J3-F09909-90009-3  
 Batteries bearing 45 10 45  
 Batteries 60 15 60

TL=15  
 Crew = 700  
 Agility = 3

## Light Cruisers: *Desideriche, Todanga, Todega, Okemo, Lusederiche, Posata, Dand, Rung, Crusedereche*

20,000 tons CL-L3336J3-F09909-90009-0  
 Batteries bearing 15 4 15  
 Batteries 16 4 16

TL=15  
 Crew = 450  
 Agility = 3

## Fighters: 300 aboard the *Fair Phyllis* and 30 aboard each of the heavy cruisers

25 tons FF-0106Y31-000000-40000-0  
 Batteries bearing 1  
 Batteries 1

TL=15  
 Crew = 1  
 Agility = 6

## Hospital ships: *Barber, Diezette, Remedy, Haven, First Assist, Health, Tinct, Salve*

30,000 tons AH-M3334J3-000200-0

TL=15  
 Crew = 950  
 Agility = 0

## Electromagnetic Effects/Communications Ship: *Graphein*

9,000 tons NL-J3336J3-200000-00000-0  
 x8

TL=15  
 Crew = 400  
 Agility = 3

## Fuel Tankers: x

40,000 tons A0-N5334C3-400700-00000-0

TL=13  
 Crew = 250  
 Agility = 0

## Destroyers: x23

2,000 tons DD-B333CJ2-F07609-90009-0  
 Batteries bearing 31 1  
 Batteries 31 1

TL=15  
 Crew = 45  
 Agility = 3

## Scouts: x48

100 tons S-13339R1-000000-40000-0  
 Batteries bearing 1  
 Batteries 1

TL=13  
 Crew = 1  
 Agility = 3

state of confusion when the war hit. Even though no more bombs will fail, the untouched areas will be hit with economic dislocations that only a master hand can minimize. No one has ever denied that Adrian Redmond is a master hand.

### Kevin Munrow

768899, age 30

As Portmaster, Munrow has the duty to aid his superior, Redmond, in any way he might. For five weeks now, since the war, flights have been coming and going via the international airport to and from Theory, carrying volunteers, supplies, and other aid. Since Redmond's arrival, the additional use of the Spaceport has been called upon, and it has been Munrow's job to keep it running smoothly as a participant in the rescue/recovery without interrupting its other, usual duties.

### Donald Wensley

7F6889, age 34

This grouchy ex-pilot is in charge of the High Port, and has been strained to the limit taking care of de la Noue's fleet.

Most of the shuttles transporting material from orbit to ground, from ground to orbit, and from one orbit to another, have come from his port; when the spacehands of de la Noue's fleet take a break from duty, they take it at his port. His other duties cannot be forgotten either, leaving him busy with some problem or other for thirty hours out of every twenty-four-hour day. If one of his lieutenants is foolish enough to volunteer to take over some trivial chore, Wensley has plenty of energy to curse the fellow up and down. Since these emotional outbursts seem to relax Wensley, his staff somehow manages to provoke one every ten hours or so. Work gets done much more efficiently because of this, and so everyone is happy.

### Robert Lawrence

ABAA99, age 34

Paradox: A loud-voiced, thick, tall man, with an aggressive manner of conversation, who is actually of a retiring disposition when allowed to be, Inspector General Lawrence of the Interstellar Port Au-

thority wields more behind-the-scenes power than do either de la Noue or Redmond, while technically subordinate to the latter.

Lawrence's responsibility is to investigate, tactfully, whether or not it would be a good idea for the interstellar government to quash Horltheur's independence and incorporate the planet. How is one to investigate an issue of such sensitivity without causing repercussions? Lawrence manages. He is to be a field agent for Redmond, without anyone knowing it. When neither one's employer nor one's contacts know whom is being dealt with, how can results be achieved? Lawrence manages. And when one is himself such a contradiction, how can he reconcile himself to his somewhat distasteful mission? Lawrence manages. Perhaps Redmond is better off not knowing just how.

## FIGURE 7: EMERGENCY CITY

**A: Water Desalination and Power Reactor.** This facility supplies 600 liters of drinkable water per minute, and nine

per cent of the city's electrical power. The rest of the power comes from imported fuel.

**B: Hospitals.** Like all the other hospitals on the planet, these are filled to overflowing, primarily with burn victims. Treatment has been effective, however; very few patients have been lost after being hospitalized.

**C: Tent City.** The city proper. Plumbing, drainage, and heating are all supplied from prefabricated units shipped here by cargo carrier and set up virtually overnight. Living is as comfortable here as might be expected, with little in the way of luxuries, but with all subsistence needs cared for. Currently, some 7,600 people inhabit the "city"; of these, only 280 are Navy and Marine personnel. Virtually every citizen of the city is single, and the only survivor of his or her family. Only luck has allowed them to live; the psychological injuries treated here are very nearly as deadly as the physical ones — or, say some doctors, more deadly. Since more citizens here die

from suicide than wounds, this may well be true.

**D: The Ruins.** Extending for dozens of miles to the north, the ruins of the old city are perhaps the prime cause of these suicides. Beyond the horizon, occupying the entire northern aspect of Emergency City, the blackened hectares present one of the most memorable and horrifying vistas conceivable. The toppled buildings all lean to the south, away from the impact point of the nearest of the seventeen bombs that hit this once-city. Black, gritty dust constantly drifts to the east, a thin veil against the sun.

A short distance into the ruins, some survivors have erected a small monument, built of stones salvaged from the toppled buildings and covered with cement. No one had the means to cast a bronze plaque, so the legend was scrawled into the wet cement, which then hardened, leaving the inscription permanent. The words are a quote from an anonymous survivor, who was heard to utter, just before dying of his burns: "This

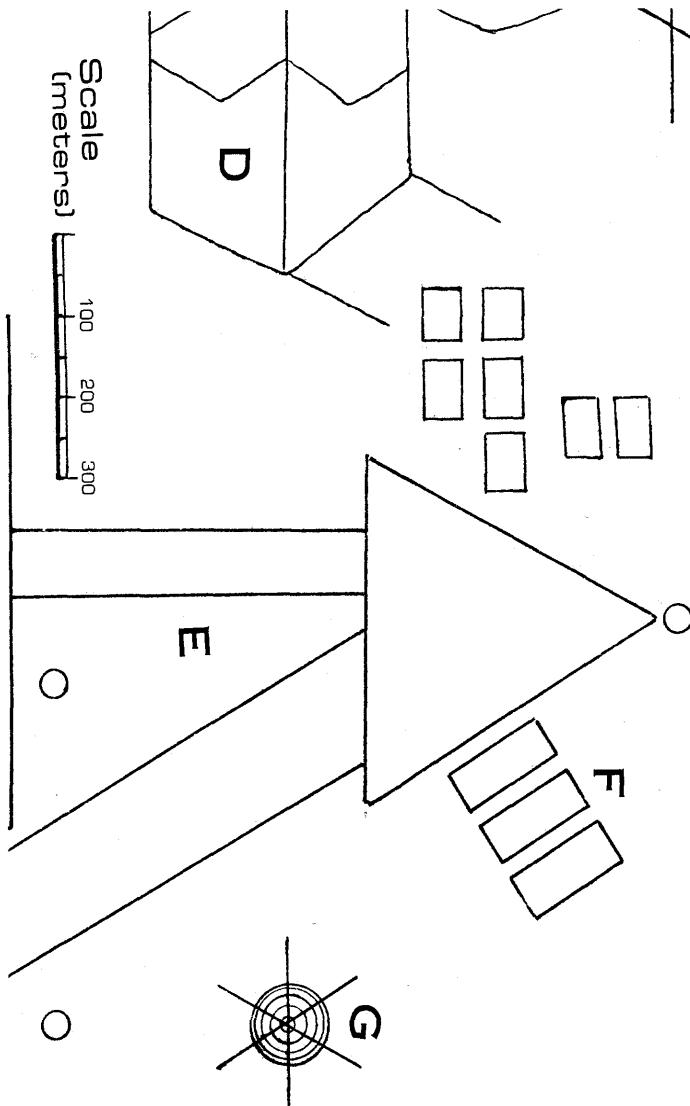
whole thing was kind of dumb, wasn't it?"

**E: The Spaceport, class D.** No boost-grid is installed here, nor terminal building, shops, construction yards, or warehouses. Ships must take off and land on their own power, and must share the runway strips with normal aircraft that fly in regularly from Horla continent. Spaced around the flattened and cemented field are landing-signal towers, so that ships may land by instrument during the city's frequent thick fogs.

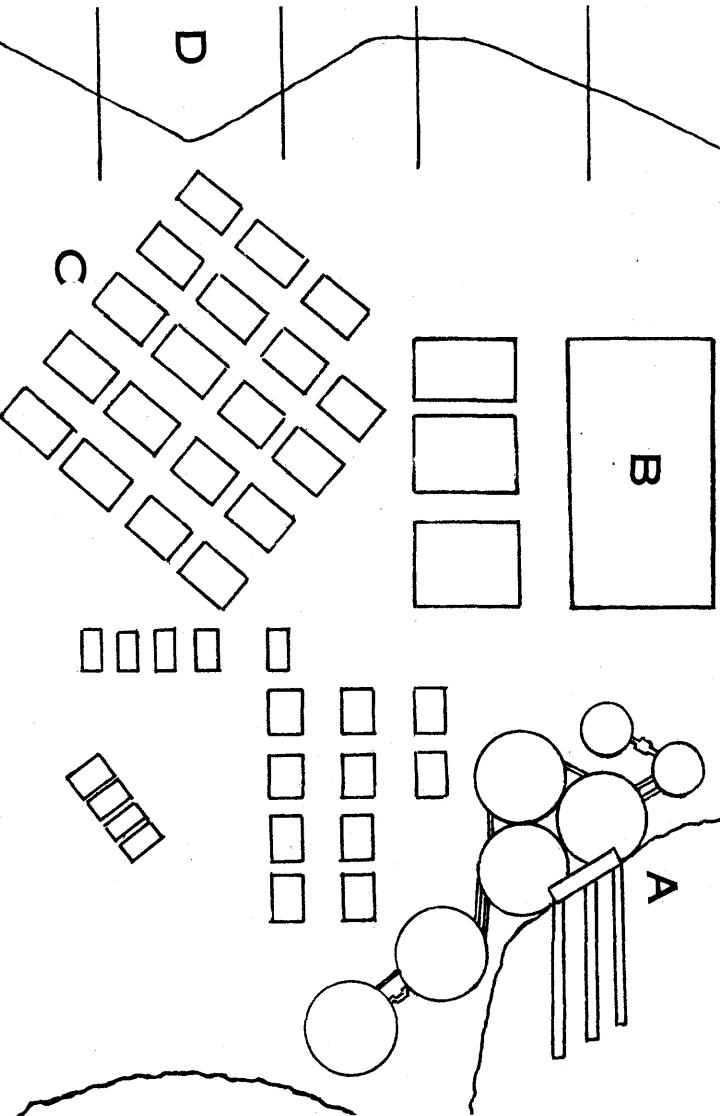
**F: Headquarters.** From here Commander Charles Denis oversees the operation of the city, as well as activities around the continent. There are five computer model/1's here, some radio equipment, and little else. Contact is maintained with the advance camps spread over the continent from this headquarters, and with the orbiting fleet. For its part, the fleet sends down updated orbital photographs of weather patterns and of surviving settlements.

**G: Radio tower.** Equipped to send and

**Figure 7**



**Emergency City**



receive radio signals, and with the gravitational equivalent of radar, this tower is the city's link with the rest of the world.

#### FIGURE 8: TYPICAL OFFICE SUITE

**A:** Corridor. Each square is 1.5 meters on a side.

##### B: Offices.

**C:** Entrance to Torman and Son, excess stock liquidators. The firm is a struggling concern, equivalent to a +1 broker. No one can quite tell if the Tormans are honest businessmen or not, although their twice-yearly audit never uncovers anything more suspicious than arithmetic errors. They don't run a rich firm, or a really successful one, but they seem capable of handling the assignments people bring to them. In this area of the office, the receptionists deal with customers by phone, vid, or in person. There is a waiting room, neither spacious nor comfortable, but Torman and Son are not usually so busy as to keep customers waiting overlong.

**D:** Work cubicle. Here, clerk Jan Warner makes his retreat, filing his personal papers and worksheets. A customer coming into the offices with an assignment that didn't require the personal attention of the Messrs. Torman would probably be shown in here to deal with Warner as a representative of the company. Jan can handle his routine, perhaps without imagination, perhaps without initiative, but with something close to competence.

**E:** Work cubicle. Similar to D (above), this is the work space of Hjalmar Tar, company senior clerk. Although he'd never admit it to anyone, Tar has every hope of someday wresting control of the company from the younger Mr. Torman. Tar's every effort has gone into knowing more about how the company works than either of his employers — so that, on the long-awaited day when the senior Mr. Torman dies, Tar will be the only one capable of keeping the company afloat.

**F:** Office of Richard Torman, the junior partner. In general, Richard runs the office while Arnesco Torman, his father and the senior partner, runs the company. There are phones to be answered, letters to be dictated, and clerks to be harried. Richard keeps things running smoothly enough, not knowing that Hjalmar Tar, the senior clerk he hates and is hated by, has already made himself indispensable. Richard wouldn't last ten days without Tar; when the proper time comes, Tar intends for Richard to find that out.

**G:** Office of Arnesco Torman, the senior partner. Privacy, more than anything else, is to be found here. Arnesco's dealings are almost always by video-phone, where his aggressive personality can most effectively be applied. Arnesco's foes accuse him of browbeating customers and clients; in truth, his tactics go far beyond mere browbeating. By

switching from being stubborn to being reasonable, and at exactly the right moment, he achieves amazing results. Arnesco is not just the crank old price-gouger he lets himself appear to be, but a crafty and successful businessman, self-trained, poorly educated, and, if the truth be said, just a little bit brilliant. For eight months now, he has secretly been training a more loyal replacement for the insidious Hjalmar Tar, so that when the time comes, the disloyal clerk will unexpectedly find himself unemployed. That, he congratulates himself, was easy. Now on to real work.

**H:** The junior clerks' work area. someone needs to draft the sales contracts into good legal formula; three junior clerks take care of that necessary bit of drudgery.

**I:** Files Room. Somewhere in here, filed where not even Arnesco Torman could find it, is the first credit ever made by the firm. The rest of the files are duplicates of such things as stock certificates, letters mailed out, letters received, contracts signed, and so on. The originals of anything truly valuable are deposited downtown at the main branch of the Bank of Exonidas.

**J:** Hallway. This way to the restrooms. In this area are the commonplace things to be found in any office: unopened boxes of forms, the copying machine, and of course, the water cooler.

**K:** The Computer. Only Hjalmar Tar really knows how to use the computer — or so he thinks. Hjalmar gains prestige and pay bonuses for programming it, debugging it, kicking it when it crashes, and tending it in general. Of course this takes some time away from his regular duties, and some of the office staff have come to look on him as a well trained loafer. Hjalmar's replacement, when the surprise is finally sprung, knows more about this class of computer than Hjalmar has any hope of learning. There is no justice.

**L:** Conference room. Since Torman and Son holds very few conferences, this has turned into an unofficial storeroom, with boxes, bundles, and form verifiers. The table is nice, though, when it hasn't got junk piled a meter deep on top of it.

#### Outer space encounters

Immediately upon breaking out of Jumpspace, player characters' ships have a great chance of having an orbital or insystem encounter. Roll 2D6 and consult the following table.

2: No encounter of note: Normal traffic about the system.

3-5: Free Trader. Roll on subtable below.

6: Pirate. Although the law level of this system as a whole is quite high, the immensity of the system makes the occasional grab for loot a feasible act — even now, while the system is swarming with

Navy ships because of the one-continent war below. Roll on subtable below.

**7-8:** Patrol. Roll on subtable below.

**9-10:** Subsidized Merchant. Roll on subtable below.

**11-12:** Yacht. Roll on subtable below.

#### Free Trader subtable

2-3: Smuggler

4-8: Legitimate

9-10: Forged papers

11-12: Forged papers/smuggler/referee's choice

#### Pirate subtable

2-4: Scout

5: Yacht

6-10: Cruiser

11: Roll twice, ignoring 11 or 12

12: Roll three times, ignoring 11 or 12

#### Patrol subtable

2-6: scout (x 1D6)

7-10: Cruiser (x 1-2)

11: Something heavier (ref's choice)

12: Roll twice, ignoring 12

#### Subsidized Merchant subtable

2-4: Smuggler

5-8: Legitimate

9-11: Forged papers

12: Carrying inspector plus bodyguard squad; or, ref's choice

#### Yacht subtable

2: Kidnap victim

3-5: Smuggler

6-11: Legitimate

12: Ref's choice

In all cases, before radio contact is established, roll 2D6 for the other ship's captain's reaction, with 2 meaning overt hostility, 12 meaning genuine friendliness, and other results being shaded in between. Modify these results due to the realistic mission of the encounter. A Pirate, rolling a 2, will attack, to board and kill; rolling a 12, he might seek to entice the players into a partnership. A Patrol, on the other hand, would be limited to extremes of either firing a warning shot and boarding for inspection, or letting the players pass without delay, while radioing across a friendly and perhaps useful message.

#### Down Port encounters

Roll 1D6 twice, to give results from 11 to 66, reading one die as tens and one as digits.

11: Unexpected -2 on sale price of cargo.

12: All the passengers you need.

13: Ship's weapons for sale at 5% discount.

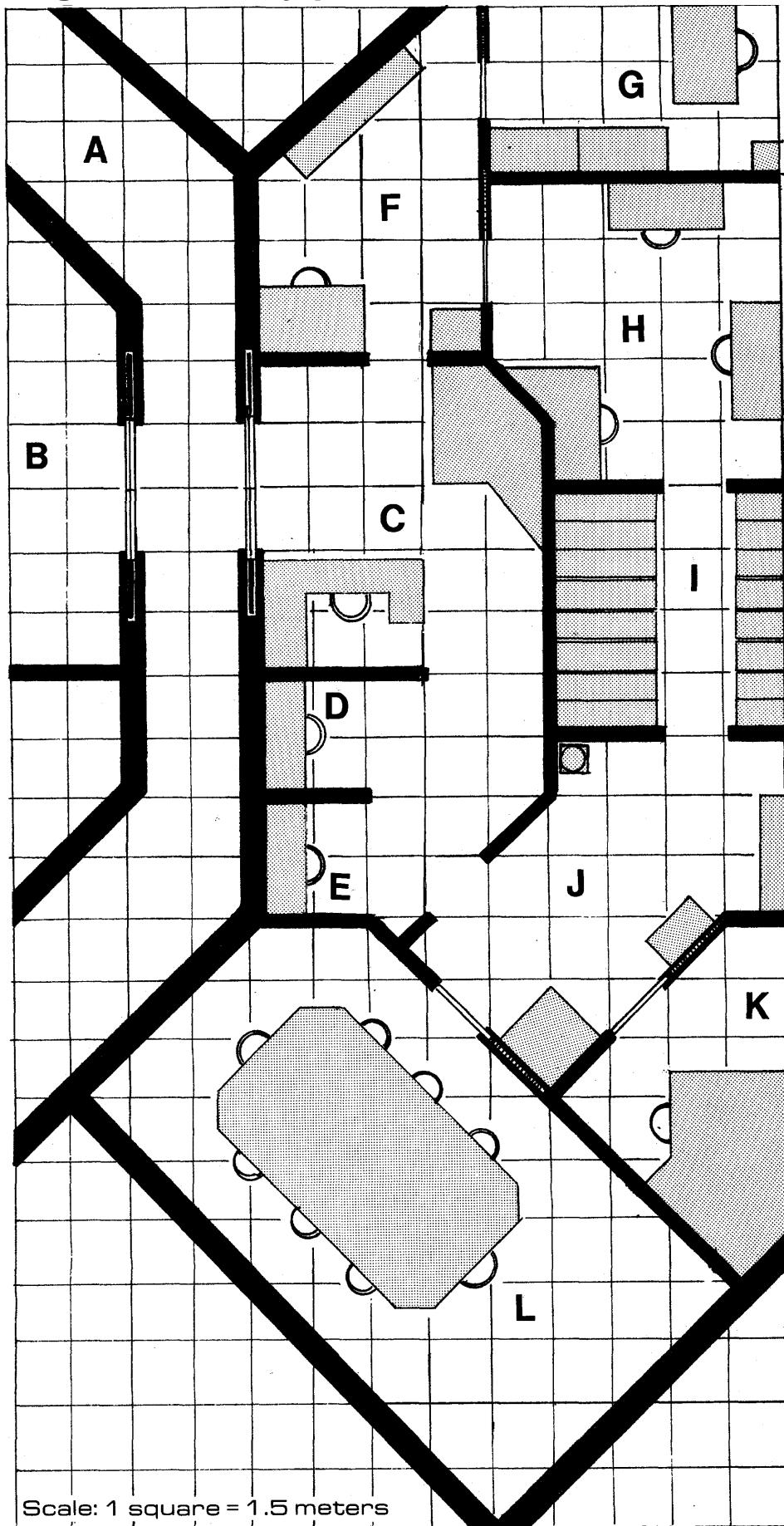
14: Unexpected +3 on cargo resale.

15: Cargo for sale: your choice of first digit on Trade table.

16: Cargo for sale: Your choice.

21: Unexpected +1 on cargo resale.

## Figure 8 Typical office suite



- 22: Fuel at 75% normal cost.
- 23: Unexpected +2 on cargo resale.
- 24: Cargo for sale at -1 on price.
- 25: -10% on annual overhaul, good here only, any time in the next six months.
- 26: -30% on price of missiles/reloads.
- 31: Bargain in a shop or store (low value).
- 32: Bargain in a shop or store (low to average value).
- 33: Bargain in a shop or store (above average value on needed items).
- 34: Bargain in a shop or store (excellent value).
- 35: Rumor.
- 36: Rumor.
- 41: Favorable business offer; ref's choice.
- 42: Rich passenger in need of quick passage.
- 43: Shipping delay.
- 44: Insult.
- 45: False accusation.
- 46: Papers served on your ship, preventing departure or loading.
- 51: Small bomb placed on your ship; 50% chance bomb threat called in.
- 52: Broker defaults, pocketing his fee.
- 53: Embarrassing fiasco with friendly natives and two marines.
- 54: You are mixed up with and implicated in illegal drug dealings.
- 55: An accident occurs (1-2, to you; 3-6, to another).
- 56: Illegal business offer (1-2, trap; 3-6, for real).
- 61: You suffer a false arrest.
- 62: You suffer a false arrest, and find that the evidence could easily lead to a conviction.
- 63: An attack from a person with a club or fists (1-2, on you; 3-6, on another).
- 64: An attack from a person with a knife (1-2: on you; 3-6: on another).
- 65: An attack from a person with a gun (1-2, on you; 3-6, on another).
- 66: An attack from a hidden Psionicist (1-2, on you; 3-6, on another).

This table is used once per day, at most. At the players' option, this table might be used only once per week.

Players may, by their option, act with circumspection, trying to avoid unpleasant encounters. If so, results on the table will be restricted to 31-46 inclusive.

#### Options for adventure

This world is legally independent of the larger interstellar government, so that going into business as an importer, for instance, while difficult, may be rewarding. There is great profit to be made in mining or salvaging the sites of the ruined cities of Theury continent, organizing relief efforts (for pay), capitalizing on the nearly vacant continent itself (land prices are wildly unpredictable), or even setting oneself up as a bandit king. (Many such have gone into business despite the order-keeping efforts of the

Navy and the Marines. Can you do better than they have?)

In space, the Fleet in Presence tends to put a damper on piracy, a disadvantage equally offset by the presence of plentiful, rich traffic ripe for raiding. In other fields, trade is needed in the items that Theury continent used to produce. Shortages of these products — mostly high-tech stuff such as computers — will begin to be felt on Horla continent before too long.

The operations of the fleet are concentrated toward the planet below. What would happen if an enemy fleet made a sortie at this time? Although this is felt to be unlikely, so were the historic raids on Pearl Harbor and on Port Arthur.

Back in the hinterlands of Theury, up in the high hills, survivors and bandits skirmish for control of the few undestroyed resources. The Marines are spread dangerously thin. Could a bandit horde, of tech level equivalent to 5 or 6, successfully ambush a patrol of Marines at tech level 15? Can the Marines keep order while killing an absolute minimum of troublemakers?

There's an assassin high in the mountains, stalking one of the few living officials of Theury continent. Is that intended victim now the legal president of the continent? Can he be saved?

Emergency City needs doctors. Theury needs able and willing workers of any description. No skill would be unwelcome. There is a government—an entire continent — to rebuild from scratch.

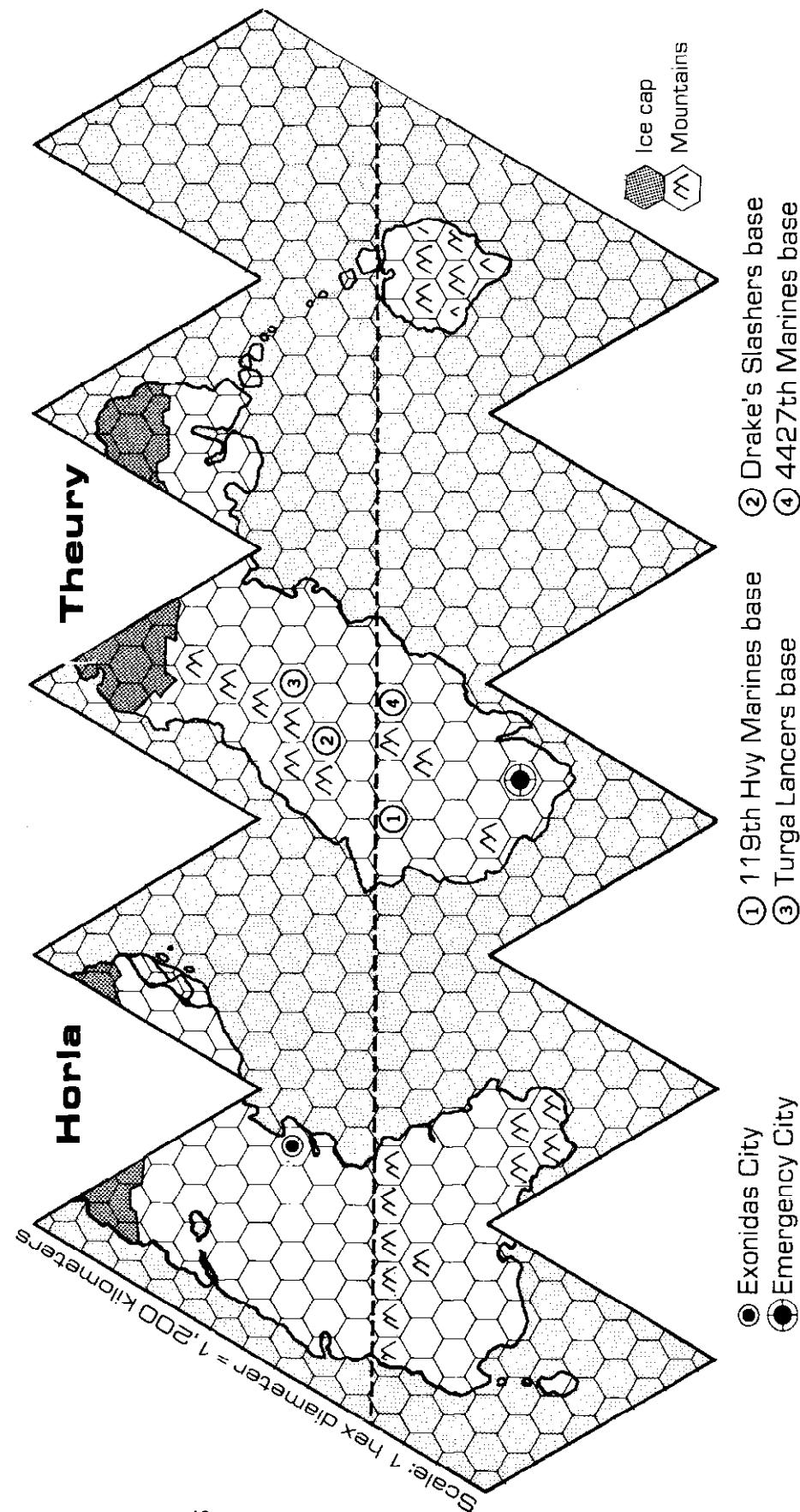
A rumor: Fifteen massive warheads are unaccounted for. Are they buried, undetonated, where they fell? Were they ever launched? Are the records incorrect? Some might object that this is a trifling complaint: The Turga Lancers carry more than forty low-power tactical warheads, and Drake's Slashers more than one hundred. But these that are rumored to be missing are city-busting devices. In the wrong hands . . . .

A rumor: A group called the Planetary Independence Party is planning to use this opportunity for confusion to take over the Spaceport at Exonidas in a commando-style guerrilla raid. Is it nonsense, propaganda, or truth?

A rumor: Theury continent has been opened up to colonization. It's up for grabs, folks. Although not true, the story has gotten wide enough circulation that entire planeloads of would-be adventurers have gotten themselves a grubstake and some camping equipment, intending to become frontiersmen and settlers. How are they to be stopped? Or should they be?

There are opportunities on Horltheur; if you don't seek them out, they'll never pay off.

## Figure 9 The planet Horltheur





# The halfling point of view

by  
**ROGER MOORE**

The smallest and physically weakest of all the demi-human races are

halflings, so named because they are almost exactly one-half the size of humans. Male halflings average 3' in height and females slightly less; they all weigh about 50-60 lbs., and they look much like small humans. In fact, evidence suggests that halflings are more closely related to humans than any other demihuman race.

Most humans tend to see halflings as child-like, basically happy, naive, and hungry most of the time. Some of these observations may be correct, but the whole impression is still rather superficial. How do halflings see themselves and the rest of the world? How do they see us?

One of the key words in halfling society is security. The world, from their viewpoint, is both helpful and hostile, and it's the hostile part that concerns them. The average halfling has a strength rating of about 8, weaker even than an average kobold. Direct hand-to-hand combat with an opponent of almost any sort can easily be a losing proposition due to this physical weakness, along with the halfling's height disadvantage (against most creatures) and the limited fighting ability halflings can achieve (most never exceed the 4th level).

These facts profoundly affect halflings' lifestyles and the structure of their community. Halfling fighters, despite their disadvantages, are still quite common in any such community. They function in an almost entirely defensive role, generally unwilling to travel with large armies off to war except in the most urgent circumstances. Halfling fighters also serve as the local police or sheriff's department, keeping the peace among their fellows and among the non-halfling travellers who pass through town.

Halfling fighters are known to go adventuring, but they rarely go very far and are prone to retire quickly soon after they reach their highest level of ability. Then they may become involved in the local militia or government, devoting the rest of their lives to community service (for which they are much appreciated).

Halfling clergy, either druids or normal clerics, almost never go adventuring unless it is a matter of great importance to the halfling people. Their primary function is to help maintain the security of the halfling community to the best of their abilities, and their most common prayers are for the continued support of their deities in keeping their homes safe and their lives untroubled.

The normal (0-level) members of the halfling community generally believe in an orderly, cooperative system of working together to ensure the continued stability of their society. Individuals who break the rules are scolded and punished for "rocking the boat," and it is impressed upon them that their activities are endangering not only themselves but

their neighbors as well. "Safety in numbers" is the moral of many of the children's stories halfling youngsters hear. This outlook tends to discourage notions of going adventuring in all but the most courageous — or foolhardy.

It is an interesting contradiction of their society that, while halfling adventurers and heroes who leave the community for long periods of time are much revered, they are also seen as being outside the bounds of "normal" halfling behavior. No parent tells a child to grow up and be like Uncle Boffo, who killed a worg singlehandedly and saved his friends from death by backstabbing a ghoul. "Uncle Boffo is not like us regular halflings," mother would say instead. "We're awful glad he's around, but still it was foolish of him to go adventuring like that when he knows he could get hurt or lost. We're safer staying here at home."

The negative consequences of this insistence upon security are readily apparent. The average halfling is reluctant to take action in unexpected situations without looking for a consensus among

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other halflings of what would be the best thing to do. Thus, halflings tend to appear shy, fearful, and overcautious when on their own for the first time. Their society appears stagnated in the eyes of other races, and they tend to close themselves off from the rest of the world.

Halfling life, while it seems to suit them well, can be described at worst as clanish and on the boring side. Yet there is a great strength in this lifestyle, too. Once motivated by a leader-type toward some course of community action, halflings en masse can be powerfully effective in dealing with invaders, disasters, or other such problems. Oppressors can be overthrown almost before they are even aware there is a rebellion afoot, due to the halflings' speed and the intense cooperation halflings demonstrate in a group of their fellows. On more than one occasion, brigands who had previously raided a halfling community have been completely wiped out on their second raid, because they overestimated their abilities against such apparently weak folk.

How is this possible? This ability is

largely due to the halflings' sense of organization and willingness to work together. At least as much of a factor is that halflings, more than any other race except elves, are natural-born guerrilla fighters. This is not to say they practice warfare a great deal — they don't. But halflings can conceal themselves in natural terrain so well as to become effectively invisible. Their feet (usually noticeable only because they are hairy) are thick-soled and well adapted for silent movement.

Most helpful of all in many ways is their skill with missile weapons. Short people of any race, unless they are very strong, are at a disadvantage in hand-to-hand combat. The best they can hope for is to kill an opponent before the enemy gets within striking distance; this is where bows, arrows, and slings fill the bill. Halflings have practiced long and hard with short bows and slings for this very reason, as well as using them for hunting and sport. Halflings have exceptional natural dexterity as well. All this combines to make them +3 to hit when using any short bow or sling — an amazing degree of accuracy, especially for a halfling who also has exceptionally high dexterity.

Imagine, then, the effectiveness of a group of thirty halflings, wearing only leather armor and equipped with short bows, hiding in a woods by a roadside, awaiting the passage of a robber gang who cannot see or hear them. Bows are very quiet, and pinpointing the location of a bow-sniper in a forest is hard enough without having to locate a sniper who can effectively disappear in the same environment. And halflings do not shoot to wound. They have trouble taking prisoners, for the same reasons they aren't good at close combat.

One of the things a small person can do to protect himself is to ally himself with a bigger person, even if that bigger person isn't the most likable sort of guy. Halflings seem to make such alliances on a larger scale than other races. It is very unusual to find a halfling community located more than a couple hours' ride at most from either a dwarven, elven, or human town.

Depending on the makeup of the nearest town(s), the population of a halfling community will include varieties of halflings that resemble their non-halfling neighbors. Hairfeet live near men, have no infravision, and reside in small cottages. Tallfellows live in forests (some in hollow trees) and have infravision like elves, as well as being more lithe and elven in appearance. Stouts are shorter than hairfeet, live in caves and tunnel complexes, and have infravision. They can detect slopes and other underground features in a fashion similar to dwarves.

Some of these similarities are probably due to imitation and the effects of the

environment. However, there is always the possibility of an occasional cross-marriage and subsequent mixing of the gene pool. Cross-racial marriages are quite rare in halfling society, but have been known to occur. Very little is said or heard about them, though.

Most halfling towns are set in temperate hills and plains. The dwellings themselves tend to vary as described above, but are usually a curious mixture of above-ground cottages and hillside burrows and tunnels. Individual homes are outfitted for comfort and a restful atmosphere; greens and yellows are much used in interior color. Large spaces are set aside for outdoor gatherings like parties, community meetings, and sports events. Gardens are common, and halflings are prone to outfit their homes with odd bits of natural decoration: rocks, minerals, plants, bark.

Everything about halfling society contributes to the feeling of closeness and safety. Even maps of halfling manufacture rarely describe areas external to the community, other than noting (on the margin, in small print) that to the northeast is "where all the humans live," or that "the mountains are said to be in this direction," and so on. Halfling communities located near dangerous areas are often honeycombed with subsurface tunnels and ambush points, should invasion occur, and the lands around are heavily scouted by missile-armed patrols; ambush points are likely to be maintained as well.

Despite their misgivings about the "bigger folks," halflings are generally open and conversational with others. They have good relations with other races, though the bigger people are seen with some suspicion. Halflings in general do not bear hatred for any race and are prone to accept even the normally unacceptable sorts like half-orcs into their community (though everyone will be watching, of course). Halflings are usually trusting and honest, though they also enjoy pranks and may become evasive if uneasy with their company.

With all the things working to discourage halflings from ever becoming adventurers, one wonders why some do anyway. Every society, no matter how closely knit, will have some rebels, those who don't fit smoothly into the usual Scheme of Things. Many halfling adventurers (particularly thieves and fighter/thieves) are from this sort of background. They grow tired of the unchanging nature of their life at home and set off seeking a little excitement.

Nearly all halfling adventurers start out with naive attitudes and high expectations of how things are going to turn out; subsequently, some fall prey to the multitude of subtler dangers one meets in the adventuring life. Yet even then, these halflings see their troubles as a fair

price to pay. Going adventuring is a sort of protest against comfort, a reaction to having things come too easily. Certainly these adventurers aren't rejecting *all* comforts (some have been known to bring their pillows with them in case they were unable to find a bed).

Adventuring is a dare to halflings, a calculated risk. It makes the adventurer more acutely aware of his or her own limitations and capabilities, and, in the words of one halfling, "It makes you feel more alive." Halfling adventurers of any class almost never travel alone, and prefer going in a large group with a lot of non-halflings in it. (Any being who is not a halfling is automatically seen as capable and experienced in adventuring.)

Because of their natural abilities to move silently and hide, most halflings desire to take up a profession that makes the best use of these talents. Being a fighter has the drawback of putting the halfling in frequent close-combat situations (the disadvantages of which have been noted before). But being a thief, or a combination fighter and thief, is another matter entirely.

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Now, it should be noted that halflings as a whole are law-abiding and honest. They don't make a living picking one another's pockets, or filching gems from treasure rooms. Thieves, however, aren't supposed to get into direct combat. They are supposed to move silently, hide a lot, and make moves unseen by their opponents. Thieves learn to open locks (fueling a halfling's normally irrepressible curiosity about what is going on behind locked doors). As for stealing, well, that can be rationalized as borrowing, or taking things that someone has too many of and won't miss anyway, and besides, it would be nice to have that ring....

Though they aren't the best at climbing because of their size, and they have trouble with other written languages, halflings make excellent thieves. They almost never admit to being of that profession, though. Halfling thieves describe themselves most often as simply "adventurers" or "scouts." One diminutive miss, a master of the thieving art, says, "I'm a fighter. I just happen to do my best fighting from behind."

Halflings who adventure for a long time often undergo a subtle change in the way they view their home community. They become mildly acute critics of the stifling aspects of halfling society, exceedingly aware of the stagnant atmosphere, the extreme concern with safety, the closed-mindedness that permeates halflings' lives.

Yet they, the adventurers, are also among the most vigorous defenders of their home towns. After a long period of hazardous journeying, after seeing the innumerable horrors lurking in the outside world, the quiet and security of a halfling community is a wonderful relief indeed. "There have been times," said one returned adventurer, "when I wished a demon or two would come through town and make things interesting. I was so bored. But then, if I really want to see demons, I can go to a dungeon. It's better that things stay quiet here at home even if it is a little dull."

Halfling religion mirrors the race's preoccupation with security. Yondalla, the most powerful and widely worshipped halfling deity, is usually known as the "Protector" who serves as a guardian against evil forces. She is able to hide her worshipers with illusions, usually making them invisible or disguising them as natural foliage. Yondalla's symbol is appropriate, too: the shield, representing defensive power and security. Her holy day is called "Safeday." Yondalla is also the "Provider," an aspect perhaps related to the halfling love for comfort. Yondalla uses a variety of magical weapons in the defense of her people, but none of them are particularly important in the ceremonies for her worship, or even in the tales in which they appear. It was Yondalla, by the way, who gifted halflings with their resistance to magic and poison, to protect them even further from the ravages of the world.

The smallest of all the demi-humans, then, is a race that at first glance should have been quickly overwhelmed by the great cruel world long ago. It wasn't, though, and halflings continue to thrive in close cooperation with the other demi-human and human races. Though halflings maintain a low-key existence, individuals arise with surprising regularity to considerable heights of fame (or infamy) as thieves; as such, they will continue to remind the rest of the world that the halflings are still here — with each purse stolen, each treasure chest broken into, and each pocket picked.

Material for this article came from the various AD&D™ tomes, librums, and manuals, as well as from Paul H. Kocher's excellent *Master of Middle Earth* (paperback, Ballantine Books). My thanks, too, to Cassandra Proudfoot, who was able to point out some of the finer points of the thieving life. By the way, wherever you are, I want my wallet back.

# The gods of the halflings



The halfling pantheon is a small one, having one greater deity (Yondalla) and several lesser deities and demigods. Most regions worship only a few of them, four or five at most, and as with all religions there may well be different gods worshipped in different areas.

Yondalla is the top authority among the halfling gods, though it is said her control over Brandobaris is minimal at times. Regardless of their orientation and spheres of influence, all the halfling deities work together against the enemies of the halfling people.

Most members of the halfling pantheon reside on one of the planes of the Seven Heavens, in an area generally known as the Green Fields. Sheela Peryroyl and one or two other deities make their homes on the plane of Concordant Opposition, and Brandobaris roams the Prime Material plane, but there are times when they too may be found in the Green Fields — just as the various Greek gods, come to Olympus to meet.

It is interesting that the more powerful halfling deities tend to be females. By contrast, dwarven gods tend to be males, and elven gods a combination of both genders. Halfling deities are not aggressive by and large, and are more taken up with home pursuits and protection than with fighting. Even the adventurous Brandobaris avoids combat if he can help it. Most halfling deities are concerned with spheres of security, sufficiency, the earth, youth, play and humor, good luck, law, peace, secrecy, love, and friendship; one deity may actually control two or more of these concerns, as is common in this pantheon. The halflings have no deities of evil nature, or ones representing war, suffering, fire and water, or death. Yondalla is usually invoked at funerals as a protector of the departed souls of halflings. There is a neutral-aligned masculine lesser deity, Urogalan, who sometimes acts as a judge of and protector of the dead, but he is primarily an earth god. Urogalan lives on

the plane of Concordant Opposition.

The four deities listed in this article are among the most commonly worshipped ones. Some halfling druids might worship deities from other pantheons (e.g., Sylvanus, Ki, Dagda, Lugh), but this is not common. Other deities may be developed as desired by individual Dungeon Masters, of course.

Despite the small physical size of the halfling deities, their innate powers are quite respectable, and many of them work closely with deities from other pantheons as well, just as mortal halflings tend to work closely with other humans and demihumans. Brandobaris is said to visit other thieves' deities, particularly Hermes; Sheela Peryroyl is on good terms with a number of Celtic divinities; Yondalla and the other lawful good deities help and are helped by other lawful good deities, and so forth. Thus, it may be safely asserted that the halfling pantheon should not, despite its size, be looked down upon.

| Deity           | Sphere of Control    | Animal    | Raiment       | Body          | Colors | Holy Days          | Sacrifice/Propitiation Frequency | Form             | Place of Worship |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Sheela Peryroyl | agriculture, weather | butterfly | bare          | green robes   | green  | full moon          | monthly                          | seeds            | open field       |
| Arvoreen        | defense, warriors    | war dog   | helmet        | chainmail     | silver | before battle      | varies                           | silvered weapons | anywhere         |
| Cyrrollalee     | trust, protection    | squirrel  | bare          | brown robes   | brown  | first day of month | monthly                          | prayers          | home             |
| Brandobaris     | thieves              | mouse     | feathered cap | leather armor | gray   | new moon           | monthly                          | stolen items     | anywhere         |

Halfling clerics and druids may be male or female. They frequently lead their communities and influence its activities. Many arbitrate disputes to obtain justice and good (if lawful good) or fairness and impartiality (if neutral).

by ROGER MOORE



### ARVOREEN

Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: 1  
 MOVE: 12"  
 HIT POINTS: 298  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (+8)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Summon halfling heroes, invisibility*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better weapon to hit; see below  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%  
 SIZE: M (4½' tall)  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*  
 WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: All good and neutral warriors (halflings)  
 SYMBOL: Short sword and shield  
 PLANE: Seven Heavens  
 CLERIC/DRUID: 8th level cleric  
 FIGHTER: 12th level ranger  
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *Nil*  
 THIEF/ASSASSIN: 10th level thief  
 MONK/BARD: 8th level monk  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 S: 20 (+3, +8) I: 21 W: 23  
 D: 24 C: 23 CH: 21

The closest thing halflings have to a god of war is Arvoreen the Defender, the patron of halfling fighters. Arvoreen never attacks an opponent first, but the first attack upon the deity (if it hits) does only half damage, regardless of its power. The first magical attack upon him is automatically reflected back upon the cas-

ter; thereafter, spells are cast normally.

For his part, Arvoreen can *go invisible* at will and attack unseen for the first 4-16 rounds of combat against any mortal, non-divine being. He commands a +4 sword that can *shapechange* into any other type of hand-to-hand weapon for combat. Once a day, Arvoreen may summon 10-40 halfling fighters (4th-level Heroes), each armed with short swords and short bows; they are AC 4 with 25 hit points each, and obey him implicitly.

Arvoreen, though quite powerful, is not a particularly aggressive deity. He fights only if attacked, though he does seek out his enemies and actively confront them to get them to desist from their evil practices. He will not go very far out of his way to avoid combat if it occurs, however, and fights to the finish.

Fighters and fighter/thieves comprise most of his worshipers; these fighter/thieves are sometimes of neutral good alignment, and all prefer to use their fighting skills over their thieving ones. While Arvoreen does not hold thieving to be necessarily dishonorable, he discourages thievery unless against enemies to better the chances for physical combat later. (It's okay, for example, to steal your enemies' weapons, or break into their camp to free prisoners or make guerrilla raids, but not just to make yourself rich.) Arvoreen absolutely prohibits stealing from other halflings or allied beings.





### SHEELA PERYROYL Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 3  
 MOVE: 9" (24")  
 HIT POINTS: 306  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16 (+6)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Unlimited use of entangle spell*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *immune to all weapons with wood in them; x2 or better weapon to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%  
 SIZE: S (4' tall)  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
 WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *All alignments (halflings)*  
 SYMBOL: *Daisy*  
 PLANE: *Concordant Opposition*  
 CLERIC/DRUID: *14th level druid*  
 FIGHTER: *7th level ranger*  
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *14th level magic-user*  
 THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
 MONK/BARD: *10th level bard*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 S: 18(00) (+3, +6) I: 22 W: 25  
 D: 22 C: 24 CH: 22

Sheela Peryroyl, known as Sheela the Wise, is the halfling deity of agriculture, nature, and weather. She appears as a halfling female dressed in wildflowers. It is said that when she sings she causes fields to grow, trees to bud, and seeds to sprout. Sheela brings good weather to her favored worshipers, but can easily send drought or floods to others.

Her followers often wear a small flower to honor her and strive to work in harmony with nature and the earth. They hold two major celebrations yearly, aside from regular monthly services: when the first crops of the year are planted (called

The Seeding, New Spring, and other titles, depending on the region), and at harvest time (High Harvest, The Reaping, etc.). Community-wide revelry is common at these celebrations, starting when the day's work is done and continuing late into the night. The length of these celebrations varies from region to region, but averages about 10 days.

There is a 1% chance a halfling making a great quest or sacrifice in the name of Sheela Peryroyl will be granted the power to cast an *entangle* spell once (at the 6th level of ability) at an enemy. This does not depend on the halfling's alignment or class, except that true neutral halflings can cast the *entangle* spell at 12th level of ability. The power may be granted several times in a halfling's lifetime, but the quests or sacrifices made to gain it will become harder and more costly with time. Only one such *entangle* spell may be had at any one time.

Sheela Peryroyl, if needed, can create a special type of staff (like a shillelagh) in one segment from a blade of grass or a twig. This weapon is +4 to hit and does 2-16 (plus strength bonuses) points of damage. She can also cast the spell *entangle* (her favorite method of attack and defense) once per round as often as she likes. The spell effects will be *cumulative* if cast several times over the same area; i.e., should she cast *entangle* twice at a troll and should it make its saving throw twice against it, the troll would be slowed to one-fourth normal speed. Additionally, each successive *entangle* cast after the first one will inflict 1-4 points of damage on all creatures trapped therein from constriction and abrasion. (There is no saving throw for this, and it makes no difference if victims can move or not.)

Her clerics are all druids and can achieve the 6th level of ability.

### BRANDOBARIS Demigod

ARMOR CLASS: 0  
 MOVE: 12"  
 HIT POINTS: 185  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12 (+7)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%  
 SIZE: S (3½' tall)  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
 WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *All thieves and those who go adventuring*  
 SYMBOL: *Halfling's footprint*  
 PLANE: *Prime Material*  
 CLERIC/DRUID: *6th level druid*  
 FIGHTER: *7th level ranger*  
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *6th level in each*  
 THIEF/ASSASSIN: *19th level thief*  
 MONK/BARD: *6th level monk*  
 S: 19 (+3, +7) I: 24 W: 17  
 D: 25 C: 23 CH: 20



## CYROLLALEE Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 3  
 MOVE: 12"  
 HIT POINTS: 260  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+2 or better weapon to hit*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%  
 SIZE: S (4' tall)  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*  
 WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *All good*

Cyrollalee is the deity of friendship and trust, as well as a protector like Yondalla. Cyrollalee is thought of more as a goddess who protects the home but keeps the inhabitants from becoming too defensive and closed in. This deity appears as a normal female halfling with brown hair wearing simple peasant's clothing. Her worst enemies are those who betray a host's trust or who break into

*alignments (halflings)*  
 SYMBOL: *Open door*  
 PLANE: *Seven Heavens*  
 CLERIC/DRUID: *10th level cleric*  
 FIGHTER: *10th level paladin*  
 MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *8th level in each*  
 THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*  
 MONK/BARD: *Nil*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 S: 17 (x1, x1) I: 23 W: 24  
 D: 24 C: 23 CH: 22

homes (of halflings) to steal. She is also the enemy of oathbreakers. If she so wills, Cyrollalee can cause all non-living objects within a radius of 6" of her to become *animated* as if by a 20th-level cleric (up to 20 cubic feet of material, for 20 rounds). These spell effects will continue even if Cyrollalee leaves the area. She can perform this power up to three times a day.

There is a 2% chance that if an exceptionally faithful follower of hers should call upon her for help while the follower is in his or her own home, Cyrollalee will one piece of furniture (not larger than 5 cubic feet in volume) to become *animated* for 5 rounds, attacking all enemies of that lucky halfling once per round during that time. Damage will vary according to the type of object animated.

Any halfling who receives this benefit must perform a service for Cyrollalee; the nature of the task (or quest) is left up to the Dungeon Master, and should be challenging but not exceptionally difficult. This gift may be given to a halfling only twice in his or her lifetime.

Cyrollalee's followers are largely regular halflings (zero-level) and some fighter types. Worship services for her are held on the first day of each month. No particular weapons are associated with Cyrollalee, though it is said she can make use of any weapon, magical or non-magical, a regular fighter could use.



The adventures and misadventures of Brandobaris, Master of Stealth, are almost beyond counting. Most of these tales share a moral: It is better not to run off into the wilderness on foolish dares; nonetheless, Brandobaris is an appealing sort of rascal. He has much of the trickster in him; he is primarily a clever thief who fools his opponents into thinking him harmless, then steals them blind and escapes their wrath. No matter how awful a situation he finds himself in (and he's found some pretty awful ones), Brandobaris always manages to find his way out again — and make a profit.

Brandobaris is so skilled at moving silently he cannot be heard by any mortal being or god if he conceals his movements. He can hide so well as to be completely invisible (seeable only with a *True Seeing* spell or magic item of similar power). Brandobaris goes on adventures to find some item he believes will make life more comfortable for him, though

this does not always prove to work out as he'd planned.

Brandobaris carries a +3 long dagger he usually wields in combat (if he cannot avoid it). This dagger will magically point out the fastest and safest direction of escape from any trap or maze (making Brandobaris immune to *Maze* spells when holding it). He also uses a +4 sling that hurls a ball of dust whenever it is used; the dust ball has a maximum range of 48" (24" short range, 36" medium range) and does not harm its victim, who feels feel nothing, but must save vs. magic at -6 or fall deeply asleep for 6-36 turns.

The followers of Brandobaris are mostly thieves and fighter/thieves. The more ardent followers are usually also the ones who take the greatest risks.

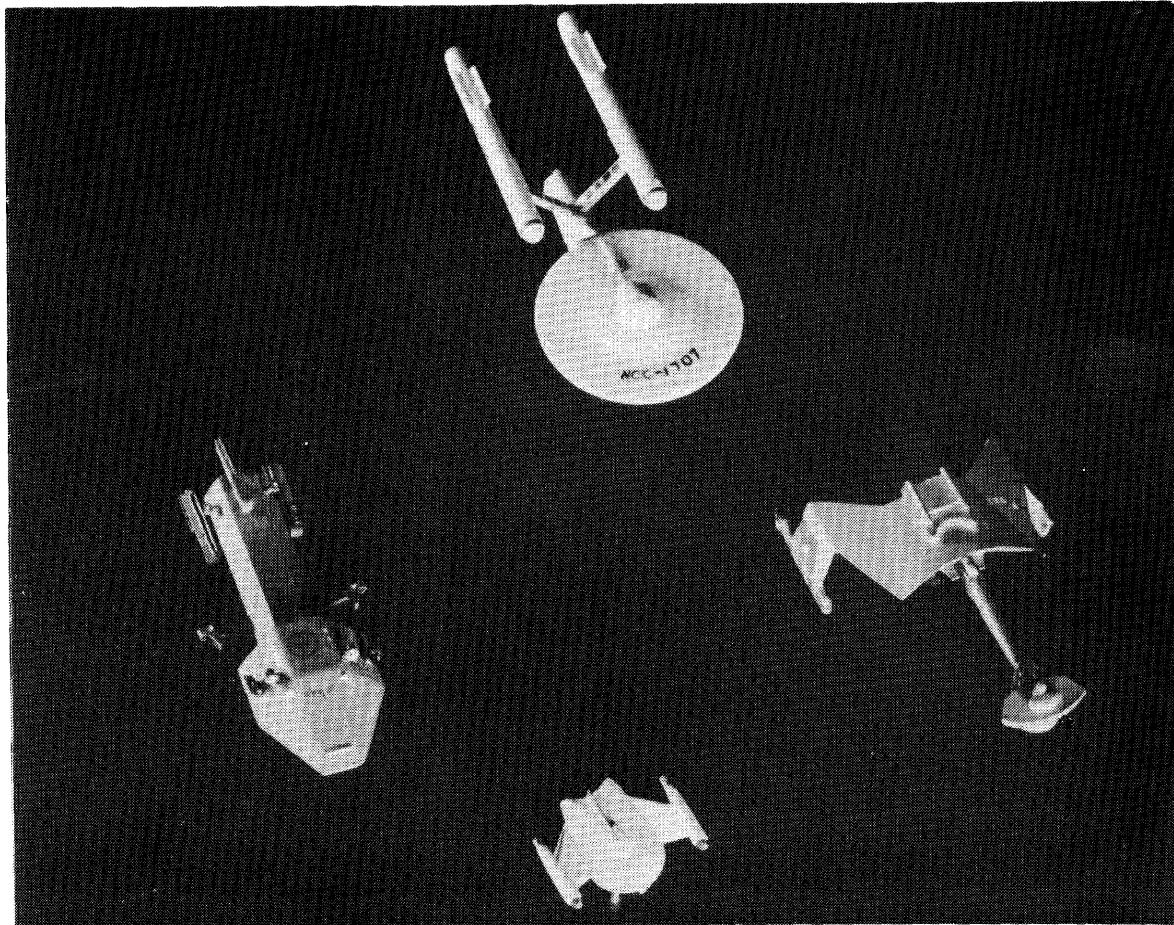
An especially daring risk (one placing the halfling in considerable jeopardy) that pays off is looked upon favorably by Brandobaris. He might reward the perpetrator of such a daring act — but only

once in that halfling's lifetime, so as not to encourage the mortal to be *too* foolhardy. There is a 5% chance that Brandobaris' reward will be given to any halfling of 10th level or lower, raising the follower one level in ability. Halfling thieves of 11th level or higher cannot receive this particular reward, but might benefit in some other fashion from incurring the good favor of Brandobaris.

Because Brandobaris wanders the Prime Material plane, there is a 1% chance per level a halfling thief of 11th level or higher will actually meet Brandobaris, in the guise of another halfling thief, and be invited by the demigod to go on a thieving adventure. Other thieves may come along on the adventure, but if they do not worship Brandobaris they might find some of their valuables missing when the adventure is over. Brandobaris reveals his identity only after the adventure is over, and only to his followers.

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# Poison

## *The toxins of Cerilon*

by Larry DiTillio

Previous articles in DRAGON™ magazine on the use of poison have been helpful. But those essays did not examine some essential aspects of poison for the DM who wants a variety of toxins in his or her game.

The most significant omission is how long a poison takes to affect its victim and how long it will it continue to do so. *Neutralize poison* is the only spell (out-

side of Heal) which will prevent further damage. *Slow poison* simply delays the effects — however, without guidelines for the action of a particular poison once it's inside a victim, these spells are difficult to adjudicate properly.

I created a wide variety of poisons for my Cerilon campaign, delineating each by smell and appearance and describing how long each takes to affect the victim and run its course. By using guidelines such as these, a wily DM can now accu-

rately play the effects of the poisonbane spells.

In such a system, there is more suspense for players; sometimes only at great expense, or at the risk of bodily harm, can they determine the true nature of a poison. But once they become familiar with the "give-away" scents and appearances of the various toxins, this knowledge will stand them in good stead throughout the rest of their adventuring.

Below is a list and description of spe-

cially created ingestive and insinuative poisons, contact poisons, and some toxins that are designed not to kill but merely provide means for capturing or slowing down parties. Each toxin has a base damage rate, to be used in one of two ways: A) Roll for damage once and divide the result by the number of rounds or turns it takes the poison to run its course; or B) Continue rolling the base damage for every round or turn the poison is in effect. Method B makes poisons much deadlier, and if used at all it should only be employed for the heavier poisons (types C and D). Most of the poisons allow saving throws, usually for either no damage or half damage. If a particular poison seems too deadly or not deadly enough, just fiddle around with the numbers to your satisfaction. You might also wish to allow saving throws in each round or turn the poison is still in effect.

#### Swallowed poisons

##### Type A

**YAKSA:** White liquid or powder, smells like cherries. Does 4-32 damage (4d8), starting 1-8 rounds after ingestion, runs its course in 1-4 turns. Save for no damage, made at +2.

**THRUM:** Light bluish liquid, smells like sour lemon. Does 6-36 (6d6) damage,

starts in 1-4 rounds, runs its course in 1-3 turns. Save for half damage.

**BRAYLOCK:** Odorless, syrupy amber liquid. Does 5-40 (5d8) damage, starts in 1-2 rounds, runs its course in 1 turn. Save for half damage, made at -1.

**CUPH:** Clear liquid, smells like pineapple. Does 4-24 (4d6), starts in 1-6 rounds, runs its course in 1-8 turns. Save for no damage, made at +1.

**NIBON:** Odorless, colorless liquid. Does 6-48 (6d8), starts in 1 round, runs its course in 1 turn. Save for half damage, made at -4.

**TUBON:** Pale yellow liquid or powder, smells like ripe melon. Does 5-30 (5d6), starts in 1-10 rounds, runs its course in 1-6 turns. Save for half damage, made at +1.

##### Type B

**KOLAS:** Thick, brown liquid, smells like roses. Does 8-48 (8d6), starts in 1-3 turns, runs its course in 1-6 turns. Save for half damage, made at -2.

**BREEK:** Odorless, colorless liquid. Does 5-40 (5d8), starts in 1-8 rounds, runs its course in 1-4 turns. Save for no damage.

**JIMA:** Light red powder or liquid, smells like papaya. Does 8-48 (8d6), starts in 1-10 rounds, runs its course in 1-3 turns. Save for half damage, made at -3.

**LOMAT:** Odorless and colorless powder or liquid. Does 5-50 (5d10), starts in 1-6 turns, runs its course in 1-4 turns. Save for half damage, made at -2.

**FRIN:** Pale green liquid or powder, smells like green apples. Does 3-30 (3d10), starts in 1-3 rounds, runs its course in 1-8 rounds. Save for no damage.

**AJIDA:** Odorless and colorless liquid. Does 5-60 (5d12), starts in 1-6 rounds, runs its course in 1-3 turns. Vision grows dim after victim takes 10 points of damage, continues to dim until 30 points is taken, at which time victim is functionally blind. Only a Cure blindness spell will neutralize this effect. If blindness does not occur, victim's vision will clear in 2-5 turns. Save for half damage, made at -4.

##### Type C

**GALAS:** Pale blue liquid or powder, smells like horse sweat. Does 4-40 (4d10), starts in 1-3 rounds, runs its course in 2 turns. Save for no damage.

**TRIF:** Odorless, light gold liquid. Does 5-60 (5d12), starts in 1-4 turns, runs its course in 1-12 rounds. Reduces victim's dexterity by 2 points for every 10 points of damage taken. This is only restored by rest. Save for half damage, made at -2.

**SILVER LOTUS:** Light silver liquid or powder, smells like lotus flower. Does 7-42 (7d6), starts in 1-2 turns, runs its course in 1-6 turns. Reduces victim's constitution by 1 point for every 10 points of damage taken. System shock roll required for every point lost; failure means instant death. Constitution points can only be restored by rest. Save for half damage.

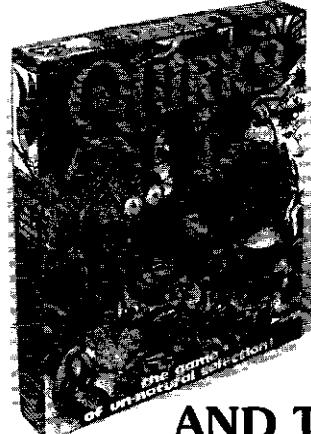
**BLACK MEAD:** Clear liquid or gel, smells like honey. Does 10-80 (10d8), starts in 1 round, runs its course in 15 rounds. Causes disorientation (-2 to hit, damage, 30% chance of spell failing) after 20 points of damage are taken; disorientation increases in 10-point steps thereafter (additional -1 to hit, additional 5% chance of spell failure). This effect wears off 1-3 turns after poison runs its course. Save for half damage, made at -4.

##### Type D

**DEVIL-ALE:** Odorless liquid, very light orange color. Does flat 60 points of damage, sets in 1-3 rounds after ingestion, runs its course in 2-5 (d4 + 1) turns. No saving throw: antidote is only hope.

**KUMBA:** Odorless and colorless liquid. Starts in 1-6 rounds, death follows 1

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round thereafter. Save for no damage, made at -3. Failed saving throw means death.

**TYLATCH:** Clear liquid, smells like sandalwood. Starts in 1 round, runs its course in 6 turns, doing 10 points of damage per turn. Victim falls instantly asleep, cannot be awakened. Save for half damage, made at -2. If the victim survives, he will awaken after the 6-turn duration.

**VEDYA:** Pale purple liquid or powder, smells like raisins. Does 10-100 (10d10), starts in 1-6 turns, runs its course over a period of 1-6 days (assess appropriate points of damage each day, dividing total into one-hour increments). Agonizing, very slow death. No saving throw.

**YELLOW MOLD POWDER:** A yellow powder made from mold spores; when mixed with liquid, it poisons just as yellow mold does. Save for no damage; failure means death, as per yellow mold.

**MUFA:** Odorless, colorless liquid. Starts in 1-10 rounds, throws victim into painful, twisting convulsions, then does 15 points of damage per round until victim dies. Convulsions have a 50% chance of causing an extra 1-6 points of damage in each round. No saving throw.

**GURCH:** Dark green liquid or powder, smells like wax. Starts in 1 round, does a flat 75 points of damage over 1-10 turns. Very painful; victim disabled after taking 15 points damage, cannot walk, fight, barely able to talk. Save for half damage, made at -4.

**PRAKA:** Small, blue-and-white speckled pellets. Starts in 1-4 rounds, does 20 points damage per round until death. Causes vivid, monstrous hallucinations; 25% chance of permanent insanity if victim somehow survives. Save in each round for half damage, made at -5, but still eventually fatal.

#### Notes on swallowed poisons

These poisons do no harm unless swallowed. Some have telltale signs, others do not. However, even the telltale signs may be masked if the poison is placed in a drink of similar smell or taste (e.g., Yaksa in cherry brandy). A successful saving throw generally indicates the poison has lost some or all of its potency or effectiveness.

Type D poison is almost always fatal. Antidotes are generally geared to a specific type of poison (A, B, C, or D). However, there is a 10% chance that a type C antidote will cure types A and B, a 25% chance that type D antidote will cure A, B, and C, and a 5% chance that a type B antidote will cure Type A. No "lower" poison antidote will cure a higher type.

Most of these poisons are fairly rare, or at the very least difficult to get. Poisons will affect monsters thusly: Type A will work on any humanoid up to 4 hit dice, type B up to 5 hit dice, type C up to 7 hit dice, and type D up to 10 hit dice. Trolls, orcs, ogres, etc., are considered humanoids and can be affected by these poisons. Most swallowed poison will not work on dragons, hydras, grey ooze, or other non-human type creatures.

#### Insinuative poisons

##### Type A

**TROLLSBLOOD:** Grayish-green liquid. Does 4-32 (4d8), starts in 1-4 rounds, runs its course in 1-6 rounds. Save for no damage.

**KOTRA:** Clear, oily fluid. Does 5-30 (5d6), acts in 1 round, runs its course in 1-10 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -1.

**STIRGE SWEAT:** Brownish, sap-like liquid. Does 6-24 (6d4), starts in 2-6 (d4 + 2) rounds, runs its course in 2-8 (2d4) rounds. Save for no damage.

##### Type B

**TEKO:** Light blue oil. Does 4-32 (4d8), starts in 1 round, runs its course in 1-3 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -3.

**AYALA:** Scarlet fluid. Does 4-24 (4d6), starts in 2 rounds, runs its course in 1-3 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -3.

**BLUE LOTUS:** Topaz-colored gel. Does 5-30 (5d6), starts in 1-4 rounds, runs its course in 1-8 rounds. Paralysis sets in after 15 points of damage, wears off in 1-3 turns if victim survives. Save for half damage, made at -2.

**PINK LIGHTNING:** Pinkish fluid. Does 5-20 (5d4), starts in 1-6 rounds, runs its course in 1-3 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -4.

##### Type C

**DREAM JUICE:** Green, black, or white fluid. Does 3-24 (3d8), sets in immediately, runs its course in 1-10 rounds. Causes victim to fall down, become catatonic, and have vivid, pleasant dreams while dying. Save for no damage.

**SILVER LIGHTNING:** Silvery liquid. Does 5-40 (5d8), sets in immediately, runs its course in 1-6 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -3.

**VILMAT:** Clear, oily fluid. Does 6-36 (6d6), starts in 3-7 (d4 + 3) rounds, runs its course in 1 turn. Reduces intelligence by 1 point for each 6 points of damage.

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taken. This loss is permanent (*restoration* necessary). Save for half damage.

**CHAK:** White, chalky fluid. Does 2-16 (2d8), starts in 1 round, runs its course in 1-3 rounds. Reduces dexterity by 1 point for each 4 points of damage taken. As with Vilmat, this loss is permanent (*restoration* needed). Save for no damage, made at -5.

#### Notes on insinuative poisons

These are in general more fast-acting than swallowed (ingestive) toxins. Coating a blade with venom must be done fairly close to its use. When a sword is sheathed after being envenomed, there is a 50% chance the venom will be rubbed off, and a 75% chance the venom will be partially rubbed away.

Blade venom wears off after three hits. The first hit does full damage, the second hit half damage, and the third hit one-fourth normal damage. After that, venom must be reapplied. Blunt weapons may not be envenomed unless the weapon has some sort of spike for injecting the poison.

Most of these poisons will be encountered in needle traps, or spread on darts or arrows. Type A will affect humanoid monsters up to 3 + 2 hit dice, Type B up to 5 + 2, Type C up to 7 hit dice. None will appreciably affect non-human monsters. Normal animals will be affected 50% of the time.

#### Special toxins

**DEATHWINE:** Odorless, burgundy-colored liquid. Could be mistaken for wine. May be used both ways, as blade venom or as a swallowed poison. It is tremendously lethal. A saving throw is allowed, at -5; if it fails, death occurs in 1 round. If the save is made, the victim still takes 25 points of damage, 12 in one round and the other 13 in the subsequent round. An antidote must be administered within 6 segments of the poison's introduction into the system or it is useless. Deathwine and its antidote are exceedingly rare. The poison affects any humanoid, even trolls and the like, but no other type of monster.

**LUPTAK:** A nerve toxin that may be injected, or can be rendered into gas. It appears to affect dexterity, causing the victim to stumble, fall down, be unable to fight, cast spells, etc.; however, it does no direct damage. There is a 50% chance of a victim taking physical damage from a fall while affected by the toxin, and a victim who is poisoned during melee would be quite helpless. Its effects last from 3-6 (d4 + 2) turns. Save for no effect.

#### Contact poisons

**WITCHHAND:** A clear liquid, almost impossible to detect. Upon contact with flesh, it does 3-24 (3d8), starts in 1-4

rounds, runs its course in 1-10 rounds. Save for no damage.

**DARKSNAKE:** Reddish powder, leaves a pale red discoloration on flesh or other surface when applied. Does 4-24 (4d6) starts in 1 round, runs its course in 1-3 turns. Save for half damage, made at -1.

**BULUKA:** Bluish, paint-like substance. Touch does 3-30 (3d10), starts in 1-6 rounds, runs its course in 1 turn. Save for half damage, made at -2. Leaves a blue discoloration after being applied.

**GOLDEN FOOL:** Gold powder. Touch does 4-48 (4d12), starts in 1 round, runs its course in 1-8 rounds. Save for half damage, made at -3. Undetectable when used on golden-colored objects; otherwise it leaves a pale gold discoloration when applied.

#### Note on contact poisons

All contact poisons must be touched by bare flesh, and do not affect monsters larger than 2 hit dice. Generally, something treated with such a poison will affect only the first toucher.

#### Non-damaging poisons

These substances are designed to render victims helpless rather than kill them.

**CHAYAPA:** A blue liquid, used on arrows, darts, needles, sometimes in daggers of venom. It must be injected, and works only on humanoids (i.e., characters), never on a monster of any type. Chayapa smells like mulberries, sets in immediately. Its effect is to cause deep sleep for 3-7 (d4 + 2) rounds. It works even on elves. Save for no effect.

**MORPHUS:** A clear, citrus-smelling liquid. Victims sleep for 1-6 turns after breathing fumes for round. Morphus is used like chloroform for abductions and the like, and is a potent gas as well when mixed properly. Works on elves. Save for no effect, made at -2.

**GHOUL SWEAT:** A scummy green gel, used like Chayapa. Smells like rotten meat. Its effect is to paralyze for 5-10 (d6 + 4) rounds. It acts immediately. Save for no effect, made at +1.

**FLYDANCE:** A green, odorless liquid. Can be made into a gas, otherwise used as Chayapa. Acts in 1-3 rounds; causes convulsions that knock the victim off his feet and cause him to shake and twitch around. Lasts for 1-6 rds. Save for no effect, made at +2.

**OPIA:** A brown powder with a honey/almond smell. When drunk (it dissolves in liquid instantly) it causes blindness within 1-6 rounds. This is temporary, lasting 1-10 rounds. Save for no effect.

#### Notes on non-damaging poisons

None of these substances work on monsters. However, Chayapa, Morphus and the others of similar type will work on normal mammals, such as wolves, apes, and bears. In such cases, the effect will come on more slowly than in a man-sized creature; a large victim such as an ape or a bear will be affected after 3-9 (d6 + 2) rounds.

#### Poison dosage

A "dose" will always indicate the amount of the poison or drug necessary to affect one creature; e.g., a three-dose vial will be enough to affect three creatures or one creature three times. Taking more than one dose of a poison requires a saving throw against each dose, and all effects are cumulative.

An "application" indicates enough poison to cover one sword or like weapon, 2 daggers, 3 spear heads, 5 arrows, or 10 darts. Remember, blunt weapons may not be envenomed.

Most liquid blade poisons will evaporate within one hour after application if exposed to the open air. All will generally give a blade a slight discoloration or flat luster.

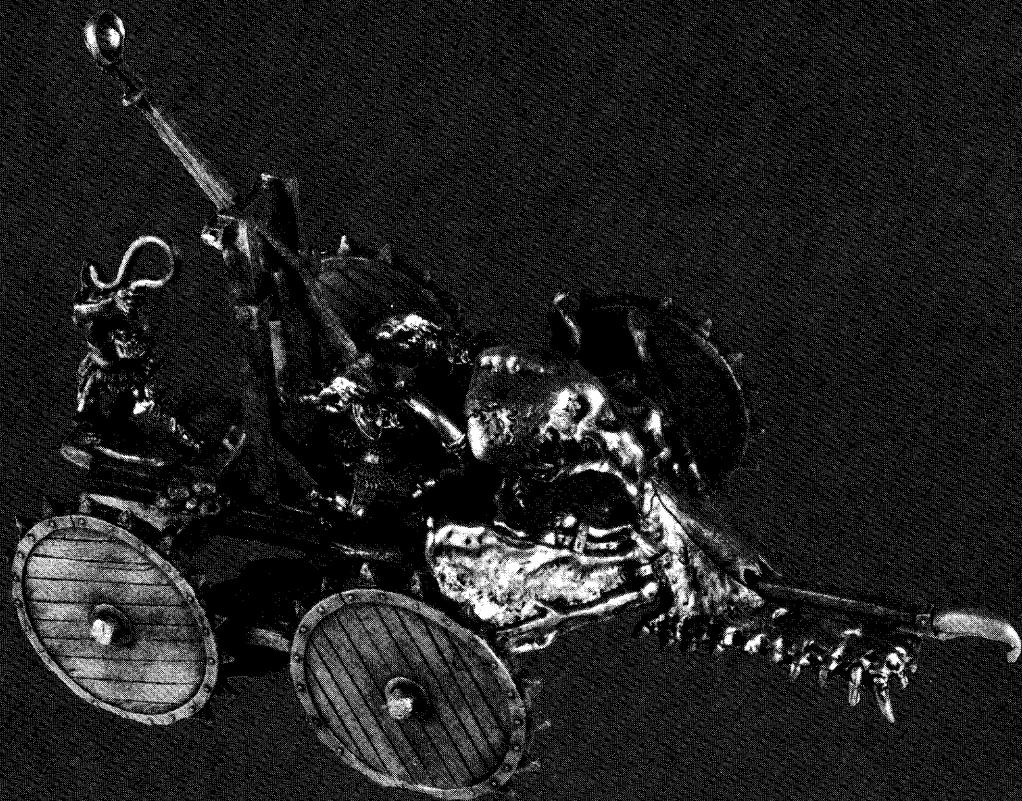
#### General notes on all poisons

Characters are assumed to know nothing about a poison until they have encountered one. Poisons with a smell will of course give hints, and all such poisons sniffed at will be described as having their characteristic smell, unless it is somehow masked. A tiny sip of poison type A or B will not do harm; a type C poison has a 50% chance of taking effect after a tiny sip; and a type D poison will always do its damage no matter how slight the taste.

A poisoned character will be aware he is poisoned only when the toxin takes effect. Symptoms can include a burning sensation, queasy stomach, shortness of breath, feverish feeling, shakes, coldness, etc. The character will definitely feel bad. A victim taking more than 20 points of poison damage will generally have his "to hit" and damage rolls lowered to simulate the effects of the poison, say by -1 for every 10 points of damage beyond the first 20.

Most of these poisons can be turned into gaseous form by a knowledgeable alchemist, but it is a dangerous and expensive process. In gaseous form, a poison's effect is the same; however, all saves are for no damage (simulating the intended victim's failure to breathe in a good whiff before it dissipates). Poison gas will usually be made from a swallowed poison type, though this is not a hard and fast rule.

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THE FANTASY  
KEEPS GETTING MORE FANTASTIC



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# Make monsters, not monstrosities



## by Lewis Pulsipher

*Elephant-sized, 13 hit dice, AC -3, move 12", immune to cold and charms, animal intelligence but with psionic powers, strikes for 2-76/2-72 and can spit acid....*

...This sounds like a monstrosity, not a monster. A collection of unrelated numbers similar to this, rolled on the tables provided in All the World's Monsters, was the cause for merriment at the local gaming session. Yes, you can "create" monsters in this random way — you don't need tables to do it—but the result is not a good, imaginative, useful monster, it's an unbelievable travesty. There is an art and a method to creating good monsters for role-playing campaigns; one should follow some common-sense rules — guidelines, really — to avoid silly, absurd, or illogical creatures.

The first guideline, as already indicated, is *avoid random aggregations of statistics*. If you have several dozen charts and tables — far more than were used in the case mentioned above — you may come up with a good monster. But, like the proverbial monkeys typing randomly, you'll wait a very long time for a Shakespearean-quality creature. If you think about the whys and wherefores of the monster, about the background to the statistics, you can derive suitable and sensible numbers for speed, armor class, hit dice, and so on from the monster's background, not from dice rolls.

The second guideline, then, is *origins first*. Every monster exists for a reason, if only because of survival of the fittest. Consequently, ask yourself how this monster came to exist, which usually means: What ecological function does it fulfill, as well as or better than any other species, which enables it to survive and reproduce? Sure, you can call something an "enchanted monster," created by the proverbial mad wizard or by a god, but this is usually a barren excuse, not a reason. Unless you desire to give a monster an ability which is quite unlikely to have developed naturally, even in a magical world — say, the ability to teleport long distances — you should leave the enchanted monsters and mad wizards to the dice throwers. Moreover, when you do devise a monster which is un-natural, remember that it will probably be unable to reproduce, and in any event will probably be very rare indeed.

The third guideline, which ties in very closely with the second, involves defining the *ecological niche* occupied by a creature. Your monster species cannot exist in a vacuum, sufficient unto itself. It is part of the world: it affects other creatures in its habitat, and is affected by them, even when adventurers or other humans are not present.

The monster must fit into the system, particularly the food chain, without de-

stroying it. If the existence of the monster would alter the balance of nature, either its characteristics must be adjusted or you must alter nature in the relevant campaign areas. The monster must have a source of food, a means of reproduction and sustenance which enables sufficient young to grow to maturity to continue the species, and places to live. All of the details of hit dice, armor class, speed, and other statistics must conform with the basic needs.

Let's take an extreme example. Imagine that many or all rabbits were as powerful as the rabbit in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," able to tear out a knight's jugular vein in one swift strike. This changes only one statistic, the rabbit's average damage inflicted per melee round, but think of the repercussions on the ecology! Swarms of carnivorous rabbits, still reproducing at a high rate but now, let's say, eating the meat they kill, would overwhelm the predators which usually limit the rabbit population. If you suppose that these creatures appeared during the era before civilization, you can imagine these rabbits covering the entire world, stopped only by the occasional great predators such as lions and tigers. It is *necessary*, for the sake of balance in nature, that the fecund rabbits be harmless eaters of plants.

What about the other extreme? Imagine a species of dragons that doesn't sleep much, produces a cub (or whatever young dragons are called) every year, and must eat 500 pounds of meat a day. Since dragons are the true kings of beasts, in any area devoid of human or other highly intelligent (and magical) interference, the dragons would soon be all over, a commonplace — until they ran out of food. As long as they could expand into virgin areas, they would spread like the proverbial plague. The point: Dragons are so powerful that, unless there is some limit to their food intake and reproductive rate, they will sweep all before them. A dragon *necessarily* sleeps a lot, to reduce energy (food) use, and rarely begets young. And it's almost as necessary that the dragon must live long before it reaches maturity; that is, before it can beget more dragons.

## The questions

Let's try to get at this in a more organized manner. When you consider how a proposed monster fits into the ecology, you can ask several questions:

What does it eat?

What factors, other than availability of food and habitat, hinder the growth of numbers of the species?

Where does it live?

There are many corollary questions, for example:

Is it herbivorous, omnivorous, or carnivorous?

What routines does it follow to obtain food?

What natural enemies, diseases, and difficulties of habitat kill young before they mature?

What is its reproduction method and rate?

What is the minimum amount of territory which will support an individual or a mated pair?

What terrain and climate is ideal for the creature, and how much do deviations from this ideal reduce the creature's ability to survive?

What are the creature's natural "defenses"?

This may seem a lot to ask, but you'll find in practice that everything falls into place quickly, or that the struggle to make it all fit will result in improvements in your monster design.

## The answers

Let's go back to the two examples to address these questions briefly. The rabbit — the real rabbit, not the carnivorous bunny — is herbivorous, that is, eats only plants. Let's assume it eats often but not incessantly (I'm not a rabbit expert) — an "intermittent" eater. It has many natural enemies which eat young and adult rabbits. As experiences in Australia demonstrated, when a foreign rabbit lacking natural enemies was introduced and overran the wild, normally predators kept the numbers down despite the fecundity of the adult rabbits. If rabbits reproduced at human rates, on the other hand, there would soon be very few rabbits.

Rabbits are small, so not much territory is needed to support a pair, and sub-species seem to live almost everywhere. The rabbit's defenses are speed of flight, color blending with surroundings, and small size — a rabbit twice as large as normal, unless he'd seen *Watership Down*, would be no less a victim of predators.

The dragon is another story. One might say the dragon eats whatever and whenever it wants, but to conform to the questions let's answer that it is a carnivore, eating only meat. It hunts alone or with a mate, and pounces on prey — often from the air, of course. The dragon has few natural enemies — man is the most prominent — but its very low reproductive rate keeps its numbers down. (Note that the lower the reproductive rate, the longer the individual of a species tends to live.)

Dragons need lots of territory because they eat so much. Although the long sleeping periods of a dragon preserve energy, a creature that big requires a huge amount of protein and calories to produce enough energy to fly. Different species of dragon tend to favor different terrains and climates; perhaps because of the dragon's size, individual species cannot tolerate deviations from the ideal.

As for the last question, a dragon's best defense is its great offense: biting, poison, breath of fire, whatever. But it also has a very tough skin, the ability to fly, and (in some cases) intelligence of a low but formidable sort.

### Food gathering

To describe the food-gathering habits of a species, which have a lot to do with its statistics, I use categories adopted from Game Designers' Workshop's excellent game *Traveller*. The types are clearly and thoroughly explained in the rules; a summary is provided here.

**Carnivores** eat meat only. *Pouncers* are solitary creatures which leap upon prey from hiding, or after stalking it. *Chasers* are usually pack animals which attack after a chase; they have good endurance but are not fast. *Trappers* use some kind of device or construction to capture prey. They tend to be solitary. A *siren* is a trapper which uses a lure of some kind to entice prey into the trap. *Killers* are vicious creatures which attack almost anything, and which seem to enjoy killing for the sake of it. Obviously, pouncers and trappers (and some sirens) must be able to hide well and move silently.

**Herbivores** eat plants or unresisting animals. *Grazers* spend most of their time eating, and for defense rely on flight or stampede if they are herd animals. *Intermittents* are solitary creatures which spend less time eating. They sometimes freeze (like a rabbit) rather than flee immediately when confronted with possible danger. *Filters* take in and expel water and air, removing nutrients. They tend to be slow-moving, if not immobile.

**Omnivores** eat a mixture of plants and animals. *Gatherers* tend to eat plants more than animals, behaving like intermittents. *Hunters* tend toward carnivorous behavior, while *eaters* will literally try to eat anything they encounter. Some beetles fit into this category.

**Scavengers** eat the kills of other creatures. *Intimidators* scare animals away from their kill. *Hijackers* suddenly steal dead prey and carry it off. *Carri-on-eaters* eat meat not wanted by the original killers and stronger scavengers. *Reducers*, such as bacteria, continuously consume dead organic matter.

Some information garnered elsewhere: Carnivores tend to be territorial (see below) and more intelligent than herbivores. The majority of carnivores hunt at night, and consequently tend to be color blind. They also depend as much on hearing and sense of smell as on sight. Omnivores tend to hunt alone. Carnivores hunt alone, in pairs, or in packs. Not surprisingly, carnivores require a much larger area per creature than omnivores or herbivores, because they're at the top of the "food chain." For example, a square mile might support one (9-18

pound) carnivore, 20 omnivores, and up to 100,000 herbivores.

If a creature seeks food alone (or with its mate), rather than in a pack or herd, it may exhibit territorial behavior. During mating time, at least, an individual will occupy an area large enough to supply it (and its family) with food, and chase away any other creature of its species which attempts to cross the boundaries of the area. Its mate is the exception, of course. In many species the males set up territories and then try to attract females.

Territories can be very sharply defined. For example, a bird may violently attack a mirror placed within its territory, seeing its reflection as a rival, but if the mirror is moved just inches beyond the boundary the bird will ignore it. An interesting kind of monster would hotly pursue any intruder in its territory — but stop dead at the border unless the intruder attacked it.

Other creatures have fixed abodes but are not territorial outside the lair, while yet others wander about for most of the year. If the monster is an egg-layer, it might stop for more than a few minutes to lay its eggs before moving on. Creatures which rear their young — mammals and birds, for example — will have different territorial habits from those which ignore their young.

### Defenses

Defenses can be classified as those which merely protect or preserve, and those which harm an enemy. The first category includes speed of movement (to facilitate escape), agility (for dodging), unusual means of movement (flight, burrowing), avoidance mechanisms such as camouflage and small size, sheer bulk (how many predators can kill an elephant or a whale?), tough skin (including dangerous coverings such as that of the porcupine), magic, and intelligence. The second category includes some of the above, such as speed and agility, size, strength, "viciousness" (which can make up for a lot), intelligence, and magic. And in either category, numbers count, or perhaps we should call it cooperation among individuals — for example, in herd animals which warn each other of danger, or in pack animals which hunt together.

### The food chain

When you think about ecological niches in your world which might be filled, consider first those which *ought* to be filled, lest the system fall apart. For example, several writers have pointed out that with all these monsters around, from orcs up to dragons, the food chain in the wilderness must be sorely strained.

That is, while plants convert sunlight into food, something must convert plants into animal matter for the numerous predators (and omnivores) which we

find in a fantasy world. Perhaps there's a peaceful, fairly large herd animal, with several subspecies, which reproduces at a high rate and efficiently converts plants to its own animal matter. The predators then live off these herds. Cattle and bison are rather large and dangerous prey for many predators, but some creature like those, though smaller, might do.

In dungeons, too, one finds a food-chain problem in an artificial ecology. The inhabitants can't live off one another (or there would be no one left for adventurers to fight), and in many dungeons it's impossible for all the inhabitants to obtain food from outside, if only because the region would soon be barren. I've solved this problem in my world by creating a giant "mushroom" which uses absorbed heat from the earth, in place of sunlight, to provide the energy which is converted into food.

Even undead and enchanted monsters must fit into some ecological niche, insofar as they cannot crowd out natural species. Fortunately, these un-natural monsters reproduce very slowly, if at all; on the other hand, they do not die naturally. They don't normally disturb the food chain because they don't eat, but they may disturb or destroy the habitats of natural creatures, and some may kill natural creatures just for the hell of it. If the local inhabitants can't fight back — imagine orcs against a powerful demon — then the enchanted monster or undead is going to strongly affect the ecology. This must be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the purposes and vulnerabilities of the un-natural monster.

### Getting ideas

So much for guidelines two and three, origins first and ecological niche. Actually, I find that sometimes the origin comes second, not first. While the origin must be a part of the creature consistent with everything else, the impetus for creating the creature may be a desire to devise a monster with one unusual ability — say, a telekinetic power which enables it to partially immobilize a victim. Once you know what power you wish to use, you can think about how this power might originate, and how the monster might fit into the ecology.

Moreover, I find that building a monster around some unusual power results in a usable, perhaps outstanding, addition to the "world." Unless it is afar out or extremely powerful ability, the monster is unlikely to be too powerful to use, and you automatically avoid the danger of piling several abilities atop one another to create a super monstrosity.

The guidelines pertain primarily to monsters you make from whole cloth, from your imagination, but most also apply to modifications of real beasts, and to your own versions of mythologi-

cal, legendary, and fictional creatures. Probably the average DM is better off basing monsters on fiction or on real creatures, at least to get some experience before he begins to make them up without a ready-made background.

Real beasts are a great source of ideas, if you're willing to do a little research. Most people know a little about the habits of mammals, but next to nothing about insects, birds, fish, and plants. Merely by increasing the size of a beast, you can create a monster out of an innocuous creature. (Yes, such increases in size, including giant humans, are contrary to the laws of physics. But these laws must stand aside somewhere; assume that an unidentified magic nullifies the square-cube relationship.)

Take birds, for example. The thrush likes to throw nuts against stones in order to get at the edible part. Might a giant thrush, or some monster with similar proclivities, try to smash a knight against a rock in order to get the "nut" out? The shrike, a small bird with surprisingly predatory tendencies, sometimes impales its victims on its beak. Think of a (domesticated?) giant shrike streaking into a party to impale a magic-user! What could a Pegasus rider do if harried by a flock of giant bluejays (which, in the real world, can drive away owls and hawks)?

Or, take bugs. Spiders conceal themselves in a variety of ways when waiting for prey—such as the tent spider, which builds an opaque web tent to hide under until prey comes near. Other types actively catch flying creatures with web nets, while yet others wait in holes in the ground. One even emits a sticky substance to immobilize a victim's feet. Giant army ants would be formidable, for reasons we can all imagine.

Several species of carnivorous plants can be easily adapted to fantasy games, such as the Venus flytrap. Plants in the sea, or animals resembling plants, also catch and eat other creatures.

You can also vary the habitats or abilities of real beasts. Someone has made up land sharks, and what about flying lions or burrowing wolves? Many legendary beasts, after all, are merely misperceptions of real animals or combinations of them (e.g., the chimaera). But try not to forget the guidelines to monster making. I have my doubts about land sharks...

For legendary monsters, you usually have some means of comparison with "real" beasts. If you know, for example, that a legendary monster was supposed to be twice as dangerous as a lion, and a lion has been defined in your game, you can work from there to determine statistics for the new creature. If a roc can carry an elephant, it must be much larger than said elephant. If a man on a winged horse could travel twice as fast as a real horse, you have some basis for assigning numbers to the creature.

### Monsters from fiction

In general, legendary creatures tend to be one-shot, made by someone, not fitting into the ecology, so you need this kind of comparison to give you some idea of what the monster can do. But monsters drawn from fiction—for example, orcs from Tolkien or Kzinti from Larry Niven—often come complete with background information about how they fit into the world. You may have to modify the creature—for example, by reducing the Kzin to animal intelligence—in order to make it fit into your ecology.

There's a tendency to make creatures derived from myth and fiction overpowered because the DM forgets to take the fictional ecology into account. Classic among these is the tendency to rate Tolkien's Gandalf—he's a kind of monster, isn't he?—as an umpteenth-level wizard merely because he is virtually the only, and therefore the most powerful, spell-caster in Middle Earth. But if you compare what he can actually do with what characters from your game can do, you'll find that he wasn't very powerful at all—in terms of the D&D® or AD&D™ rules, maybe an eighth-level cleric with a magic ring and the ability to use a sword.

Similarly, just because some monster dominates a work of fiction, the DM thinks it should dominate or be powerful enough to dominate his world. He forgets that many role-playing worlds have a far higher proportion of powerful magic and powerful creatures than any world of fantasy or science-fiction in literature.

(Note that the words an author uses to describe a creature don't necessarily have the meanings used in your game. Gandalf is a "wizard" because he uses magic, but this doesn't mean he must be a wizard, that is, magic-user, in a game such as the D&D game, which allows for several types of spell casters.)

You can vary legendary or fictional monsters, too—for example, a cockatrice which paralyzes or causes insanity, a foot-long Pegasus, a unicorn which shoots missiles from its horn, a ghoul which flies. Make them larger or smaller, change speeds, change means or medium of locomotion, and so on.

### Not "all or nothing"

Whatever type of monsters you create, try to avoid dogmatic or draconian pronouncements. The "rule" is: *Avoid all-or-nothing characteristics*. For example, a monster which is vulnerable only to certain rarely used spells, or only to a series of three or four spells cast in a particular sequence, is a poorly designed creature. If the players have ample opportunity to learn of these peculiarities before they encounter the beast, it will be a usable, but not outstanding, creature. Aside from the all-or-nothing nature of the creature, which is bad for the gaming aspect of role playing, it's hard to explain how this

unusual characteristic evolved. Even if the creature is enchanted, why in the gods' names was it created with this odd Achilles heel? Another example of this mistake is the monster which is deadly unless you know the trick which makes it harmless. The Pictish demons, for example (as described in the Gods, Demigods & Heroes supplement to the original D&D rules) are frightening until you learn to lie down—then they ignore you. This is an amusing change of pace for a one-shot creature but would not work for a standard inhabitant of the world.

An example of how to create a monster with one special power and avoid all the pitfalls might help. Let's begin by giving the new creature a simple telekinetic power. The creature can hold down or immobilize an enemy or victim, or knock fruits off a tree, but it could not use telekinesis to pull a lever, turn a knob, use a knife, or do any other detail work, even if it were trained to do so.

Unless the creature is very large, it could not immobilize a large victim—the victim would drag the monster along. For no particular reason except a prejudice against giantism, let's take the alternative approach: that the creature hunts in packs to cooperate in immobilizing large prey. Yes, the creature does hunt—otherwise why the need for this telekinetic power? And flesh-eating monsters are more fun, so let's say this creature is an omnivorous hunter which eats animals primarily, but is not averse to an occasional juicy fruit or plant stem.

Hunting in packs reminds me of the wolf. Wolves rely on their endurance to run down a victim, but let's not follow the wolf idea too closely. Perhaps our creature pounces on prey, utilizing its telekinetic power. If the prey isn't caught within a few seconds, the monster won't try to chase it. Having no need for speed, our monster is relatively slow, but must hide well in order to surprise its victims. It must live in areas providing cover—probably brush or forests with heavy undergrowth, certainly not plains. Since the creature lies in wait for prey, it hunts when most animals are active—the daytime, especially when new or failing light increases the chance of concealment.

Wolves are built for a long run, but our monster need not be. And unlike the wolf, it doesn't need to fight—its prey is immobilized and helpless. So, let's say the creature is four-legged but rather fat and roly-poly roundish, weighing 50-60 pounds. It is not equipped with sharp teeth. Instead, it has a mouth shaped like an elephant's trunk, through which it sucks a victim's blood (or a plant's juices) until the victim is nearly dead. Then the monster can chew bits of dead flesh slowly, perhaps over several days. Because the monster is slow and often sits immobile for hours, it uses little energy and eats surprisingly little for its size.

To settle questions of reproduction, let's recall our sort-of model, the wolf. We'll say our monster has one litter of 6-8 live pups per year, in spring (mammalian). Many die from their inability to keep up with the pack. Those that survive mature in 6 months and live for about 5 years, if they're lucky. The pack is promiscuous; males and females do not have "mates" per se, but can freely intermingle provided the pack leader does not object.

Generally, lone animals of this species could take small prey, but would fare poorly in areas frequented by large animals, especially large predators. Perhaps an individual driven from one pack would join another — nature's way of insuring against continual inbreeding. Sometimes an overlarge pack might divide, or two packs reduced in numbers by fights, famine, or disease might merge together. The packs may be loosely territorial. Probably an area of many square miles could support only one typical pack of 10-40 individuals, which would continuously move about within the territory.

Altogether, this monster's role is that of a medium-sized flesh eater which can take both small prey, like rabbits, and the occasional large animal, like cattle, without presenting much danger that it will overrun the countryside.

This creature's natural defense is numbers and cooperation between members of the pack. The latter may require a significant intelligence. Armor class, hit dice, and attack statistics need not be outstanding, for the creature relies on telekinesis and its considerable size.

A summary of the creature's statistics as they might be expressed for use in an AD&D™ adventure are as follows:

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 10-40  
ARMOR CLASS: 8  
MOVE: 3"  
HIT DICE: 2  
% IN LAIR: *Nil*  
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2 plus suck blood  
for 1-4 per round thereafter  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Telekinesis*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Semi to low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
SIZE: S  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

When the creature hits a victim it attaches to it and sucks blood each round thereafter until one or the other is dead, or until the pack flees. The creature can stand immobile for hours. Its hair tends to be the color of the terrain it typically hides in — e.g., dark greenish in a forest. The creature surprises on a 1-4 on a d6 in suitable terrain when lying in wait.

Thanks to their intelligence, these animals are easily trained, but they occasionally choose to ignore orders.

The telekinesis ability is easy to define now that we've determined the other characteristics. Each creature can immobilize animals up to 30 pounds (300 gp) in weight at close range (up to 1"), 20 pounds at medium range (1"-2"), and up

to 10 pounds at long range (2"-3"). It cannot move while using telekinesis unless it is holding less than half the allowable weight. Several can join together to hold one victim, perhaps taking turns so that all can approach and "drink." The weights given assume the victim is not unusually strong for its weight. And if the victim is only partially immobilized, it moves at a proportionately slower speed — effects may be compared to those of a slow spell. Humans and many other creatures also gain a saving throw vs. paralysis which, if successful, effectively halves the weight the monster's telekinetic power may hold.

What about a name? I keep a list of names I've picked up from literature, from other players, and who knows where else, because I'm not much good at making them up. I call this monster the "Starkhorn" — for its "trunk," I guess — but perhaps you can think of something better.

Aside from simple encounters in the wilderness, this monster may be most useful to a DM when domesticated to guard an area or to assist a magic-user.

I don't want to give the impression designing monsters is a mechanical process. Inspiration, if not romanticism, is a necessary element, particularly when the monster first takes shape. Without a decent idea, you won't get good results. The sources and guidelines described in this article will help you turn a good idea into a good monster, and help you avoid turning a lousy idea into a lousy monster. But no one can tell you how to turn a lousy idea into a good monster.

## 'Priceless value'

Dear Editor:

When I read "Two Magazines?" from Jim Dopkin (*Out on a Limb*, #56), I was extremely surprised and outraged by his suggestions. Overpriced? Like all TSR products?!? I found myself wondering what he was talking about!

From my past experience with DRAGON and TSR I have always found the items reasonably priced. In fact, they are a bargain and are of priceless value because of the hours upon hours of fun and fantasy they have brought me. I cannot see how anyone who plays D&D seriously can call it overpriced.

Nels Bruckner  
Jasper, Ore.

I've ever seen). I therefore would like to propose a different method for reprints: Handle it like the DRAGONTALES anthology. Print a magazine with all the Sorcerer's Scroll articles, or a book of monsters from the Dragon's Bestiary, including for example, all the monsters from one year, and print it each year. I personally would love to see all the NPC classes under one cover.

A single book/magazine for each special feature you normally print would let people choose exactly what they want reprints of, not entire issues but articles from many issues. I hope this is feasible, because I am dying to see the old NPC classes and monsters which appeared in the first DRAGON magazines.

Howard Chu  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

## Reprints revisited

Dear Editor:

In issue #53 (*Out on a Limb*), concerning the subject of magazine reprints, Chris Doyle comments on two types of collectors, those who want to keep issues for souvenirs and those who want original copies. There is another type of collector, though: those who, like me, want only the articles themselves and could care less about fancy artwork (although this magazine has some of the best artwork

Howard's letter was received in late December, at just about the time our second volume of reprinted articles was getting to the store shelves. It's no coincidence that the Best of DRAGON™ Vol. II collection includes, among other things, many of the old Sorcerer's Scroll columns and most of the NPC classes from the olden days. As for single-volume presentations, such as a Dragon's Bestiary collection: We have no such plans at this time, but if we keep getting friendly persuasion from people like Howard, maybe our plans will change. — KM

Matt Rogers  
Deerfield, Ill.



(Continued from page 4)

multiple proficiency in one item. For each proficiency past the first, the character gains a bonus: +3 for fighters, paladins, and rangers, +2 for clerics, druids, thieves, assassins, and bards, and +1 for magic-users, illusionists, and monks.

Using this system, I have in one of my campaigns a 6th-level elven fighter with quadruple proficiency in the longbow. He has a +9 from special proficiency, +1 from good dexterity, and +1 from being an elf for a total of +11, which means, quite simply, that anything with an armor class of 5 or worse (at short range) is dead meat as far as he is concerned. Then again, he can't tell a mace from a halberd. In any case, I am hoping that someone besides myself may profit from the employment of these points.

Matt Rogers  
Deerfield, Ill.

# Convention schedule

**FANTASYLAIR '82, March 13-14** — Ponca City, Okla. is 2 hours from Wichita, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa, and 6 hours from Dallas and K.C., according to the sponsors of this event, the Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers. The convention will feature continuous gaming of all types, including an official Pente tournament, an AD&D Open, and several other smaller AD&D tournaments. A "Monster Mash" ball featuring a costume contest will be held on Saturday night. Admission is \$10/day. Write: Northern Oklahoma Dungeoneers, P.O. Box 241, Ponca City OK 74602.

**SIMCON IV, March 19-21** — A gathering of gamers to be held at the psychology building on the University of Rochester River Campus. Admission is \$5 per day, either by mail or at the door. More information is available from SIMCON IV, P.O. Box 5142, Rochester NY 14627.

**LUNACON 25, March 19-21** — One of the longest-running regional science fiction conventions in the United States, the next Lunacon will be held at the Sheraton Heights Hotel in Hasbrouck Heights, N.J. Special guests will include author Fred Saberhagen and artist John Schoenherr. The event is staged by The New York Science Fiction Society, otherwise known as The Lunarians, Inc. For more information, contact Lunacon 25, P.O. Box 338, New York NY 10150.

**STELLARCON VII — QUASICON, March 26-27** — A mini-convention scheduled for the University of North Carolina campus in Greensboro. Films, guest speakers, a costume contest, computer demonstrations, and many types of gaming events will be on the agenda. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to SF3, Box 4 E.U.C., UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

**METRO CHICAGO GAMES FEST, March 27-28** — A gaming-for-charity event sponsored by the Compleat Gamer shop. Tournaments will be staged at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Palatine, Ill. All proceeds from the two-day gathering will go to the Easter Seal Society. For details, call the Compleat Gamer, (312)934-0020.

**MAVCON '82, April 2-4** — A gaming convention offering fantasy, science fiction, and wargaming competitions. The site will be the University of Texas in Arlington. More information is available by writing to MAVCON '82, Box 19348-50, University of Texas, Arlington Station, Arlington TX 76019.

**SPRING REVEL, April 3-4** — More fellowship and fun from TSR Hobbies, including all of our — and your — favorite games, food, etc. Just drop in at the American Legion Hall, 735 Henry St., Lake Geneva, Wis., or for more information write: Spring Revel, c/o TSR Hobbies, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Admission prices are \$3 for the weekend or \$2 per day.

**SCIENCE FICTION WEEKEND, April 8-11** — This will be a large exposition at the Registry Hotel in Irvine, Calif., to be concerned primarily with science fiction literature and games, but also scheduled to include tournaments for D&D players and gamers of other persuasions. The salesroom will have more than 50 tables of merchandise which should interest SF and fantasy fans. Several special programs, panel discussions, and an awards luncheon are scheduled. Full memberships are \$12 apiece in advance or \$17.50 at the door. One-day admission prices are \$5 for Thursday and Sunday and \$7.50 for Friday and Saturday. Contact: Science Fiction Weekend, c/o Fantasy Publishing Company, 1855 West Main St., Alhambra CA 91801.

**MUNCHCON II, April 16-17** — To be held in Corbly Hall on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va. Guest speakers will include Richard and Wendy Pini, Jean Lorrah, and (tentatively) L. Sprague and Catherine deCamp. Seminars, D&D tournaments, films, and an art show are on the schedule — and admission is free! For details, send a SASE to Marshall University Science Fiction Society, Memorial Student Center, Marshall University, Huntington WV 25701.

**TRI-STATE CON, April 16-18** — Role-playing games, board games, miniatures, painting competition, seminars. For more information, write to Tri-State Con, P.O. Box 40455, Cincinnati OH 45240, or call (513)671-3791.

**CONTRETEMPS, April 23-25** — A science-fiction convention to be held in Omaha, Neb. Further information is available by writing to: Ship to Shore, P.O. Box 12373, Omaha NE 68112.

**MARCON XVII, April 30-May 2** — The University Hilton Inn, 3110 Olentangy River Road, in Columbus, Ohio, will be the site of this convention, which features guest of honor Hal Clement. Admission prices are \$12.50 through April 1, \$15 at the door. For more information, write to Marcon XVII, P.O. Box 2583, Columbus OH 43216.

**LEXICON I, May 1** — Role-playing games, wargames, comics, and many other subjects will be part of this one-day event in the Bishop Kearney High School hall in Rochester, N.Y. For details, write to Mike Bovard, President of the Bishop Kearney Gaming Association, 24 Leonard Crescent, Penfield NY 14526.

**WARGAMERS WEEKEND, May 21-23** — This fourth annual event will be held in the DAV Hall in Newburyport, Mass. Sponsors are the Newburyport Wargamers Association and the Toy Soldier hobby shop. Admission is \$3 per day (\$1 for Friday evening) in advance, or \$4 per day (\$2 for Friday) at the door. Tournaments are scheduled in role-playing games, historical games, miniatures, and board games. Overnight accommodations and refreshments will be available at the hall. For more details, contact The Toy Soldier, 20 Unicorn Street, Newburyport MA 01950, phone (617)462-8241.

**CONQUEST III, May 28-30** — SF author Norman Spinrad will be the guest of honor at this gaming event, to be held at the Continental Hotel, Kansas City, Mo. Tournaments are scheduled for AD&D and TFT players, among others, and a game room will be open round the clock. Registration is \$9 until April 30, \$12 thereafter. Contact: CONQUEST III, P.O. Box 32055, Kansas City MO 64111.

**GRIMCON IV, May 28-31** — A fantasy and SF gaming gathering to be held at the Oakland Hyatt House, Oakland, Calif. The schedule includes all the usual convention attractions: films, dealers, demonstrations, and lots of tournaments. Pre-registration cost is \$14 for all four days. At the door, a four-day ticket will cost \$17, and single-session admission at the door is \$7. More information is available by writing to GRIMCON, P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley CA 94704.

**M.I.G.S. III, May 30** — The Military Interests and Games Society will stage this event at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Seminars, painting contests, a flea market, board-game competitions, and miniatures tournaments are among the scheduled events. Contact: Les Scanlon, President of M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6.

# Figuratively Speaking

RAL PARTHA

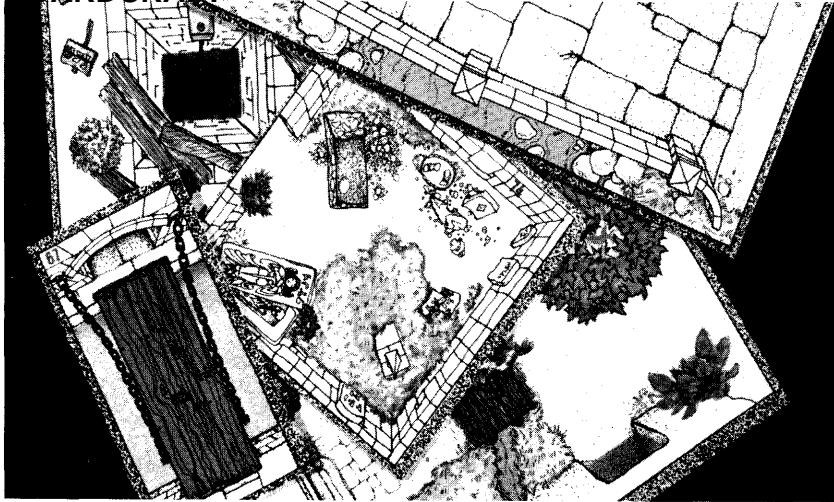


Griffon

Prop: 8      Det: 7      Anim: 6      Tech: 7

This beast shows plenty of evidence of Ral Partha's usual attention to detail, nicely blending the griffon's avian and feline characteristics. The wings are attached at two points, making the assembled figure quite sturdy.

BOARDCRAFT



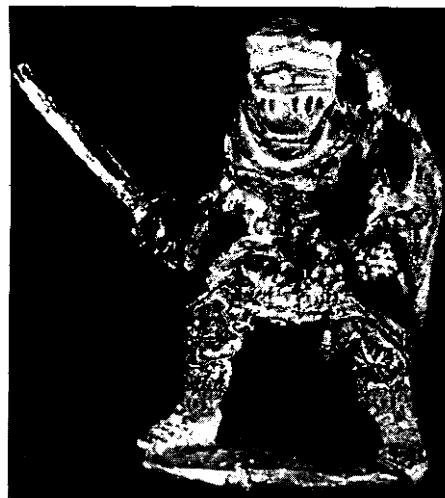
Fantasy Paths

Three different sets of these strong, durable dungeon floors are available. Each set includes 54 top views of rooms, passages, cottages, and so forth. Mounted on thick cardboard and printed in four colors, these playing aids rank as the Cadillac of dungeon floor sets. (At Cadillac-style prices, unfortunately.) The wide variety of shapes and formats make them usable in just about any underground situation.

Reviews by  
Bill Fawcett

Photographs by  
Kathy O'Donnell

CITADEL



Paladin in Chain

Prop: 7      Det: 6  
Anim: 7      Tech: 6

This fully armored fighter comes with a pack that appears equipped for a dungeon adventure.



Monk

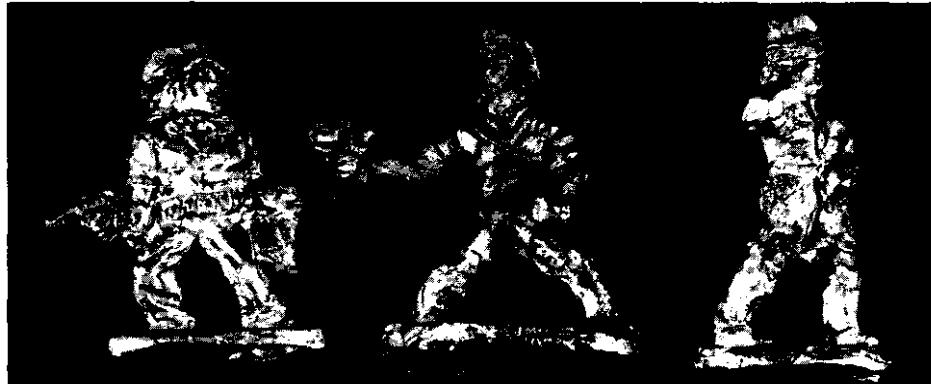
Prop: 6      Det: 7  
Anim: 6      Tech: 7

A lantern, rope, and crossbow are among the useful items visible in the pack of this adventurer.

**CASTLE CREATIONS****Super Spies**

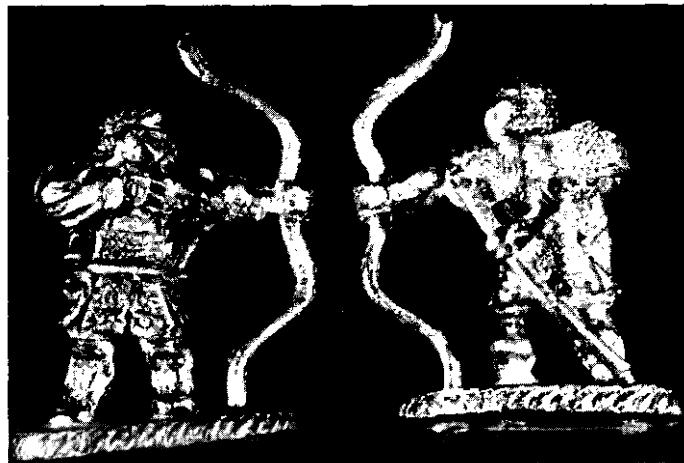
Prop: 6      Det: 5  
 Anim: 5-7      Tech: 6

Two sets of espionage artists are part of the Castle Creations line. All suitable for use with the TOP SECRET™ game, the sets include spies made famous in books and movies.

**KNIGHTS & MAGICK****Samurai Warlord**

Prop: 6      Det: 7  
 Anim: 6      Tech: 7

This set from Heritage includes mounted and dismounted warriors and an accurately dressed retainer. Both figures have both types of Samurai swords.

**NAWAR**

Samurai (15mm)

Prop: 7      Det: 7      Anim: 6      Tech: 7

Above-average detail and properly proportioned limbs are the hallmarks of this moderately priced line of figures.

**HERITAGE MODELS**

Prop: 6-7  
 Anim: 6-7

Det: 6  
 Tech: 7

Women of Conan (bottom left) and Sorcerers of Conan (bottom right)

Each of these sets brings life to four\* characters from the legendary Conan novels. The women are all heroines from various tales, and each of the wizards is appropriately posed in the act of casting a spell.

# ASTGARD

## MINIATURES



DA-1



DA-1A



DA-2



DA-3



DA-4



DA-5



DA-6



DA-7



DA-8



DA-9



DA-10



DA-11



DA-12



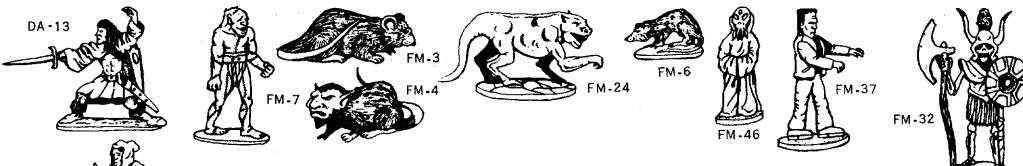
DA-13



DA-14

25 mm DUNGEON ADVENTURER SERIES

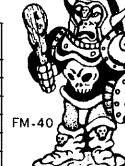
| STOCK NUMBER               | DESCRIPTION             | PRICE    |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
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| DA-25                      | Gnome                   | (2) 1.60 |
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| DA-47                      | Illusionist             | (1) 1.25 |
| DA-51                      | Adventuress             | (1) 1.25 |
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| DUNGEON ADVENTURE SPECIALS |                         |          |
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25 mm DUNGEON ADVENTURER SERIES

25mm FANTASY MONSTERS SERIES

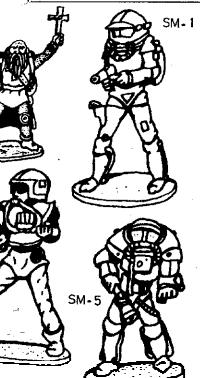
| STOCK NUMBER | DESCRIPTION             | PRICE     | STOCK NUMBER | DESCRIPTION                | PRICE     |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------|
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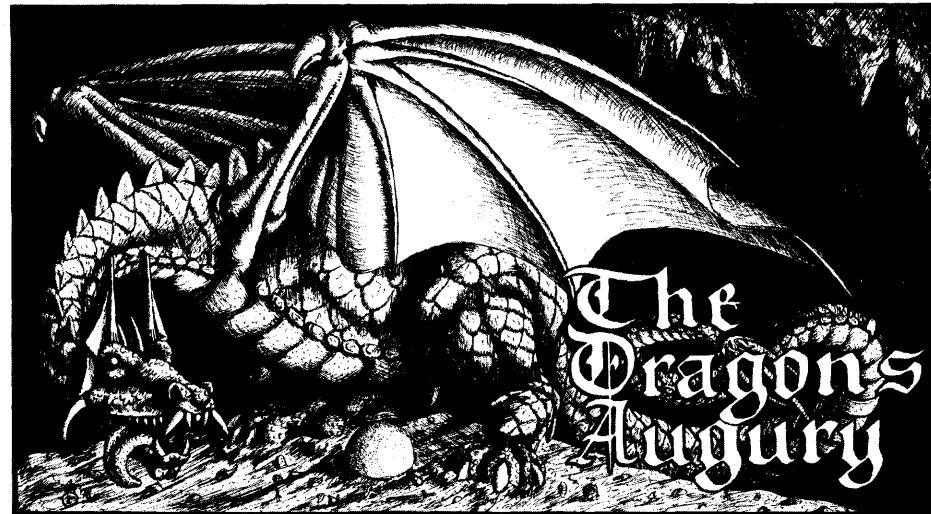
# STARFIRE III adds strategy to tactics

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Two of the more interesting games in Task Force's extensive line of science fiction and fantasy games are *STARFIRE* and its sequel, *STARFIRE II*. Both space games (reviewed in DRAGON™ #47) are tactical, concentrating on ship to ship combat between vessels.

The third game in the series, *STARFIRE III: EMPIRES*, changes that to give the game a strategic framework. *EMPIRES*, in essence, completes the set; players are now both tacticians and strategists, admirals and policy makers. *STARFIRE III* allows players to make economic and political decisions about the management of their empires and reasons for fighting battles. Tactical battles gain importance beyond any scenario victory conditions, and become the incidents that win and lose empires. (It should be noted that *STARFIRE III* does not stand alone; *STARFIRE* at least is required to conduct battles.)

*EMPIRES* is a fairly complex game with a great deal of detail. From two to six players each manages the affairs of a burgeoning interstellar empire among the six home systems and sixty other star



systems. The game has no counters; records are kept on paper while tactical encounters are managed with *STARFIRE* and *STARFIRE II* counters and maps.

The base of *EMPIRES*' strategic approach is its economic infrastructure. Planets are exploited, with profits financing freighters for tying systems into the

mercantile net and warships for the protection and aggrandizement of stellar real estate. Percentile dice rolls determine planet values; the values of uninhabited worlds can be increased by colonization; inhabited worlds that become allied (that is, the natives peacefully accept amalgamation) can increase their

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value; conquered systems offer no such bonus. Die rolls also determine the presence of intelligent life, as well as population size and technical level. To successfully integrate a world's economic value with the rest of the empire, merchant ships of sufficient tonnage to transport the world's output must be built and routed through the world on regular runs. Commerce raiding thus becomes an important element in strategy; it is possible to cripple enemies by preying on their merchant shipping, cutting off the empire from its resources.

Megacredits collected can be spent on a number of things: colonization, increasing technology, and starships. Most money will be used on the last, since the *STARFIRE* system emphasizes ship-to-ship action. Returning from the previous games are the plethora of beam weapons, missile and gun launchers and specialized systems for tracking, scanning, and exploration. Some new items are offered: transit instruments for recording warp lines, capital ship missiles to give larger ships a distinct edge over their smaller brethren, minefields, long range scanners and pressor beams (the opposites of tractor beams). All of these new additions make some sense and contribute to the game system. Some, like the transit instruments, are required because of the new strategic aspect of the game, while others, such as the capital ship missile, are offered to rectify what the present designer felt were omissions or needed changes from the first and second games.

*EMPIRES* also deals with political relations between empires, concentrating on non-player/player relations. As mentioned previously, newly discovered sys-

tems can be inhabited by intelligent, technically advanced races. Rules are included for conquering planets — and suppressing rebellions of conquered worlds — as well as more mundane events like non-player reactions.

*EMPIRES* has some interesting nuances. Players compete for economically rich systems, but because of the movement system, which allows movement only between systems connected by warp lines, some stars gain strategic importance for the movement opportunities they present. The warp line method tends to channel fighting and intensify battles. At the same time, the randomness of the system generation procedures and warp lines help insure campaigns are different.

*STARFIRE III* offers a surprising amount considering its size and price. However, there are drawbacks. Ground combat is completely ignored. Also missing are victory conditions; participants apparently must negotiate this. The rules themselves need tighter organization and clarity. Finally, a *STARFIRE* campaign is time-consuming —certainly not something to set up and play in a single sitting. Fighting battles alone takes a lot of time. The *STARFIRE* tactical system plays quickly, but a medium sized battle can last an hour to 90 minutes, and battles are fairly frequent. Fortunately, the nature of the game allows easy set up for playing in installments.

*EMPIRES* has a few problems, but is still an impressive framework for a *STARFIRE* campaign that can be tinkered with and added to. The game is not exactly a must for *STARFIRE* players, but adds some new dimensions.

*STARFIRE III: EMPIRES* is available in retail outlets only and sells for \$3.95.

## 'The Epic Game of Sorcery'? **DEMONLORD** is what it claims

Reviewed by Tony Watson

On the cover of the box for *DEMONLORD* is the subtitle "The Epic Game of Sorcery and Conquest". This is a fairly bold claim for a game that comes in a package just a shade over four inches by seven and sells for under five bucks. One could raise a serious question as to whether a design produced under such parameters could really measure up to the term "epic". After an examination of *DEMONLORD*, this reviewer can only conclude that the game does indeed rise to its cover claim. The game is well designed, physically attractive, and combines a broad scope with an intelligent and appropriate use of detail.

*DEMONLORD*'s cover is a real attention getter. Charles Vess' painting of the

Demonlord, clad in purple robes, green cape and golden breastplate, his arm upraised in spell-casting while his vast host is assembled behind him, is visually striking. The attention to artwork and graphics is continued throughout the game. The 12" x 14" heavy cardstock map is very colorful depicting the steppes, hills, forests and streams of a section of the continent of Narth. The perspective is a bird's eye view; terrain features are irregular and do not fill the entire hex. A given hex could have two or more different kinds of terrain but the problems this might entail for movement is nicely circumvented by the fact the movement costs are assessed per hex-side crossed rather than hex.

The counters, 154 in number, are equally as attractive. Effective and ap-

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ropriate use of color highlights the playing pieces. Demon forces are purple, the troops of the Hosar alliance are gold, and the various neutrals come in shades of blue and green. Silhouettes, in a great variety of styles (many are unique to a particular unit) serve both decorative and functional purposes. They denote the type of unit, such as foot, horse, leader, or monster, and their shading, either white, black outline, or solid black, indicates armor class.

*DEMONLORD*'s 24 pages of rules are coherent, nicely organized and easily understood. Pertinent charts and tables, as well as a pictorial battle order and a listing of all important die rolls and die roll modifiers are contained on a large fold out sheet.

The rules themselves are a fine balance of intricacy, simplicity and chrome. There is enough complexity to keep the game interesting and to account for the more salient aspects of this type of warfare. The basic mechanics of movement and combat are compact enough to allow for a large section on magic and lots of little goodies like alliances with neutrals, invocation of magical entities and troops and a thoughtful system of victory points.

Movement is a function of hexsides traversed and movement mode of the unit (either foot, cavalry or winged);

costs of terrain varies with the type of unit. Stacking is unlimited, so both sides tend to group their forces together into two or three armies under command of one or more of the handful of leaders available for each. Leaders are important: unled troops move at half rate for one thing, while commanders make important contributions to combat and are the workers of magic.

Battles occur when forces of both sides occupy the same hex. The troops involved are removed off the board to set up in battle line. Terrain determines the size of each side's line as well as modify the strengths or certain types of units. For example, missile fire is rendered less effective in battles in forests and heavily armored troops are at a disadvantage when crossing streams. Units are matched up one by one, until the battle line maximum is reached or someone runs out of troop counters. Leaders are stacked with units that might need the help—leaders can use battle magic against opposing units in hopes of temporarily lowering their morale factor. Three unit ratings come into play in battles: missile value, melee value and morale. Missile fire, for both sides, precedes melee, though both procedures are essentially the same. The attacker must roll his attack factor or less (subject to modifiers for armor, terrain and leadership) to hit the target; if he does, the target must roll less than its morale factor to be unaffected, the morale throw being made on only one die. If the morale rating is matched, the unit routs. It will be saved if its side wins the battle and taken prisoner if not; in any case, the unit is removed from the line of battle. If the morale rating is surpassed, the unit is destroyed outright. Combat continues in rounds until one side is wiped out or decides to withdraw. withdrawing units must make an automatic morale check, which can lead to disaster if the withdrawing forces are of poor quality.

Walled cities and castles figure prominently in the game, mostly as sources of victory points, so some simple siege

rules are included. The besieger can choose to sit back and invest the citadel, which is less costly but more time-consuming than the second option, the bloodier and quicker assault. As in field battles, the leadership and magic ratings of leaders play important roles.

In addition to battle magic, magic users can use more strategic spells, depending on the power of specific sorceror. The exact spells for each side is determined randomly, by picking chits, though a player may choose one chit of his choice and give up one random pick. These spells include things such as *earth-pit* which effects the movement of enemy units or *necromon*, which allows the Demon player to resurrect recently eliminated units. The magic system adds considerably to the game's play and flavor, but doesn't overpower the military aspects of the game.

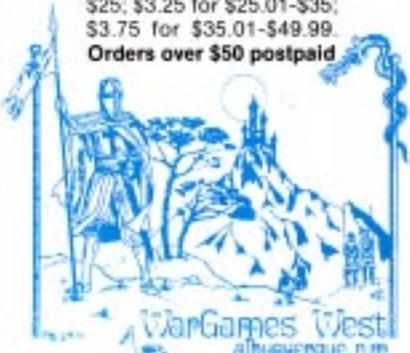
Both sides can attempt to augment their forces by attempting to influence the five neutral powers. Successful rolls bring that force in on the player's side, though allies can be fickle and can revert to neutrality or even join the enemy in adversity. Each side can ask for reinforcement, at a victory point loss, from off board areas. Invocation of special magical units can be accomplished by magic users at specified temples. For example, a Demon magic user can attempt to conjure an army of gargoyles, trolls and dire wolves at the temple of Ninghiz.

Victory in *DEMONLORD* is either by sudden death, when one player seizes control of the other's capital, or more likely, by victory points. These are accumulated on a per turn basis for such things as controlling more fortresses than the enemy, holding enemy cities, winning battles, and having fewer allies than the opposition.

I was quite pleased with the game; it's fun to play, colorful and filled with interesting little nuances. The designer has added features, such as the alliances with neutrals, variable reinforcements and variable setups for some units, to insure the game does not become repetitive. The combat system is an intelligent treatment of the medieval-style fantasy encompassing factors such as weaponry, troop type, morale and armor as well as a healthy dose of magic. Enough thought has gone into setting the scene, that it is relatively easy for the players to get into the spirit of the game. For five bucks, *DEMONLORD* is a real bargain; it is one of the few games where I feel I got more than I paid for.

*DEMONLORD*, designed by Arnold Hendrick, comes boxed and sells for \$4.95. The game is designed for two and plays in three or four hours. *DEMONLORD* is a Dwarfstar game, a division of Heritage USA, and as far as I can find out, is available only through retail outlets.

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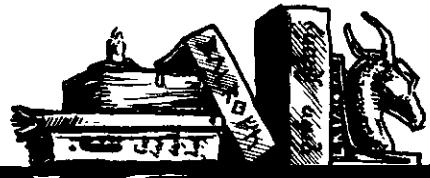
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# Off the Shelf



Reviewed by Chris Henderson

**THE BEST OF RANDALL GARRETT**  
 Robert Silverberg, editor  
 Timescape Books 835574-2  
 \$2.95

Could it be that something is getting better, instead of worse, for a change? If this collection is any indication, maybe.

Science fiction is a field famous for its rip-offs: Shoddy volumes of the stuff have been hurried together and dumped on the market for the unsuspecting buyers since the paperback book was invented. *The Best of Randall Garrett* is not one of those books, however. Thank goodness.

Lord Darcy is Garrett's most famous and most popular character and the aristocrat-detective shows up in both *The Eyes Have It*, a tale of scientific sleuthing, and in *The Spell of War*, an account of young Darcy's first experience as a subaltern in the army.

Along with these is *The Hunting Lodge*, possibly Garrett's best-known story. Nine other tales round out the volume, each one helping to demonstrate the author's bizarre wit. There is a subtle effectiveness to his stories; much of the intriguing word-play Garrett is known for surfaces readily in this collection.

And, on top of all this, one of the author's friends or admirers, introduces each story, a list that includes Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ben Bova, Norman Spinrad, Isaac Asimov, and Philip Jose Farmer.

Collections come out all the time, but only a few are worth buying. This is one of them.

**FUZZY BONES**  
 William Tuning Ace Books 0-441-26181-7-250  
 \$2.50

H. Beam Piper endeared himself to millions with his alien race novels "Little Fuzzy," and "Fuzzy Sapiens." Although he wrote another "Fuzzy" novel, it was lost shortly before his death and has never been found.

So, someone finding *Fuzzy Bones* on a bookstore shelf might mistake this for the lost Piper classic. This isn't the case, but it's no reason to be disappointed.

Ace books, having the rights to publish Piper's works and pastiches of the same, could have palmed anything off

on the public and scored a quick buck, but chose not to. Author William Tuning was given the task of studying Piper's work and continuing his Fuzzy saga. With amazing clarity, and a strong grasp of what Piper's writing was all about, Tuning produced a totally enjoyable novel, one well worthy of being called the sequel to *Little Fuzzy* and *Fuzzy Sapiens*.

Its nearly 400 pages (a record these days in the genre) contain too much story to relate here. Suffice it to say that the book goes into the anthropology of the Fuzzies, examining why they seemed out of place on the planet where they were first found by man. Tuning received help in developing the book's science from a number of people, Robert Forward and Robert Heinlein among them, assuring the reader of accurate as well as entertaining premises throughout.

Few science fiction series were written with such warmth or regarded as highly by the public as this one. It makes one feel good to see something so beloved treated with such respect.

## THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO HOME COMPUTERS

Frank Herbert  
 Pocket Books 0-671-43964-2-595  
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Computers have been with us as a concept for more than 30 years. Although most people don't understand them, practically anyone can tell you that a computer is a thinking machine. We all know them to be tools used by corporations, governments, hospitals, school districts, and other large impersonal bodies. Recently, however, they have started to make themselves more available to the public.

To most people though, the idea of a home computer is still on the same level as a family jet. Home computers seem to be pretty much of an extravagance to most people, a lot of money for a purposeless toy. Buying an expensive, useless gadget which takes a masters degree in electronics to operate is not most folks' idea of a wise investment.

The truth is, however, that computers are now priced within the budget of the ordinary home. They are extremely useful, and they are fairly simple to both program and run.

A home computer can balance bank statements, pay bills, plan meals, calcu-

late taxes, play its owner a game of chess, backgammon — or anything else —and a lot more.

Herbert has compiled the information needed for anyone who wants to either buy, or at least think of buying a home computer. He explains what is coming, and why most everyone will need some form of home computer before the 80's are over. He teaches the reader how to write programs, how to understand computers, and how to buy one. It is a simple book, written in easily understood language. It is not a great book — but, then, most necessary books aren't.

## IN IRON YEARS

Gordon R. Dickson  
 Ace Books 0-441-37077-2-250  
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Gordon Dickson is the creator of the Dorsai series. In recent years, he has done little more than churn out one Dorsai novel and story after another, until some of it has gotten a tad threadbare. To some people, Dickson's name has taken on a few spots of tarnish; they keep waiting for him to write something else.

Since the author does not seem so inclined, Ace Books has put out a collection of his short stories ranging over 20 years of his lengthy career. Included are humorous stories such as *Zeepsday* from the early 50's, to the title story, written only a few years ago.

All of the stories, no matter how whimsical or serious, however, deal with an Earth of the future. It is a crowded, often deadly, complicated and dreary place, in many ways hateful and loathsome. The subject matter ranges from the goings on in an inter-galactic small-claims court, to the firing of a secretary with tenure.

The problem with describing the stories as a group is that, outside of the very good writing and the wit and grace that went into each, there is little unity of style to allow quick bunching.

Like most good Dickson stories, the seven in this collection are filled with surprises. It is good standard science fiction fare, with a number of enjoyable jolts and twists thrown in to elevate it from the average to the highly enjoyable. Dickson is at his best here, showing the stuff that made him a Hugo and Nebula winner. *In Iron Years* is not a great collection, but it is a good one.

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THE ART OF LEO & DIANE DILLON  
Byron Preiss, editor  
Ballantine Communications  
5-28449-6-1495 \$14.95

One force that helped make science fiction and fantasy respectable was the art book. Showing the world the genre had more to offer than just "comic book art" spread appreciation for it. Unfortunately, many collections suffered from an obvious lust to exploit a new market. Why, how, and when they were painted—details like these were rarely given to the reader.

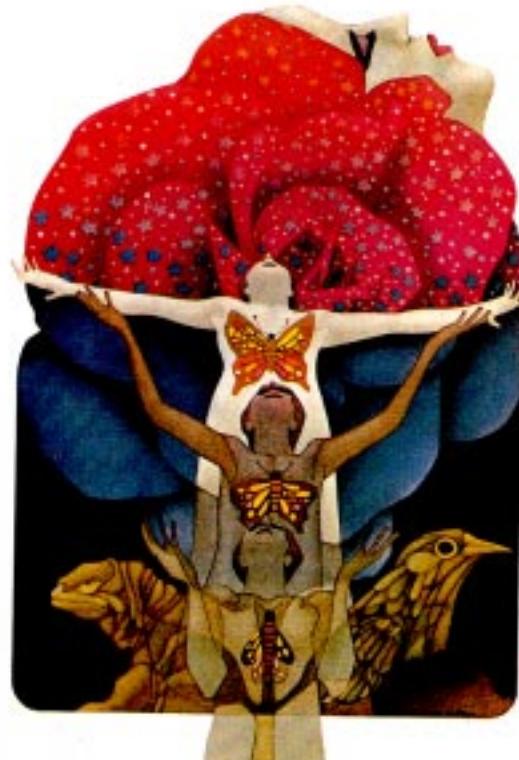
This, at least for one stunning volume, has changed. *The Art of Leo & Diane Dillon* is in all respects what an art book should be.

First off, the history of both artists is given. Editor Byron Preiss and the Dillons

wrote a marvelous text that nicely complements nearly 130 illustrations. Most of the pieces also have an accompanying paragraph or two with background for the work.

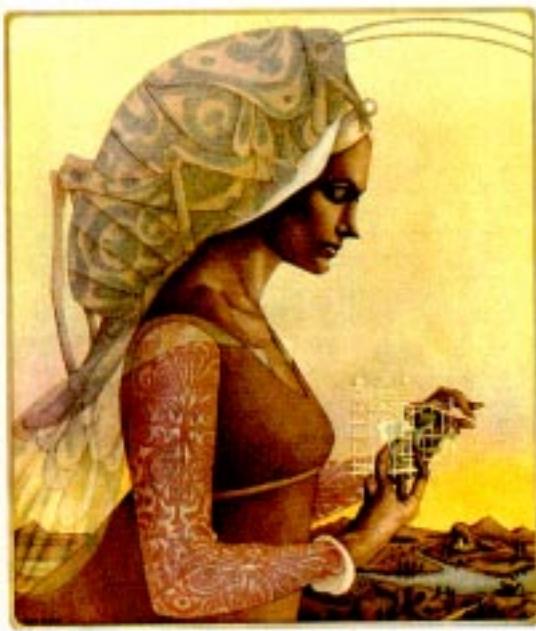
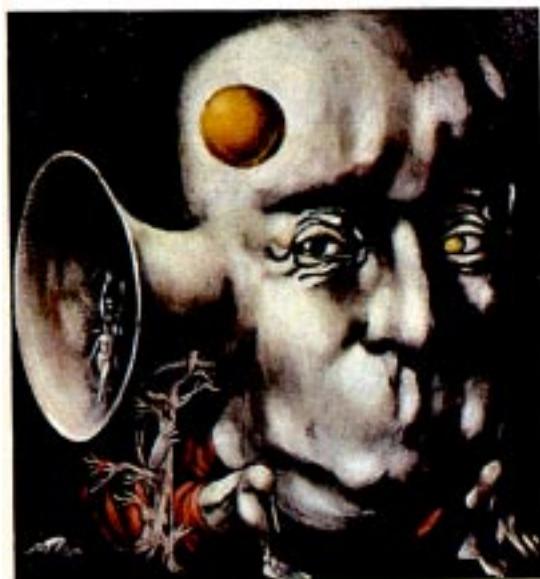
The Dillons have perfected a wide range of styles and mediums in more than twenty years as illustrators. Of the 48 color plates, the same method of creation is rarely used twice: watercolors, pen and ink, woodcuttings, rubber cement resist, bleaching, crayons, pastels and more.

And, although the book is the price of three admissions to "Raiders of the Lost Ark" the expense is worth it. This is a volume that is easy to return to again and again, and in the long run, afar more enjoyable experience than still another Frazetta book. This one was made with some small thought given to the audience, and it shows.



Color plates from *The Art of Leo and Diane Dillon* reproduced with permission of the publisher.

ABOVE: Two watercolor and pastel paintings. *A Wrinkle in Time* (left), a 1979 painting, and *Mystic in Love*, completed in 1973.

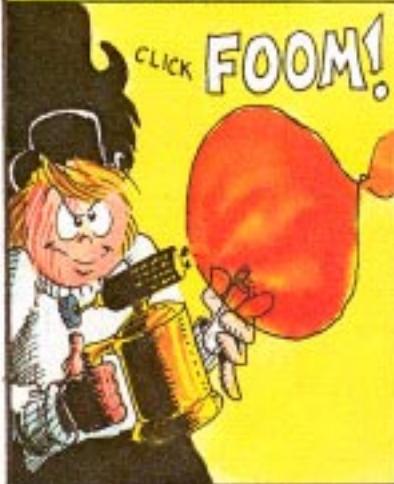


ABOVE: (clockwise, from upper left) *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*, a 1967 casein; *The Eagle and the Raven*, a 1978 gouache; *No Doors, No Windows*, a 1975 watercolor and

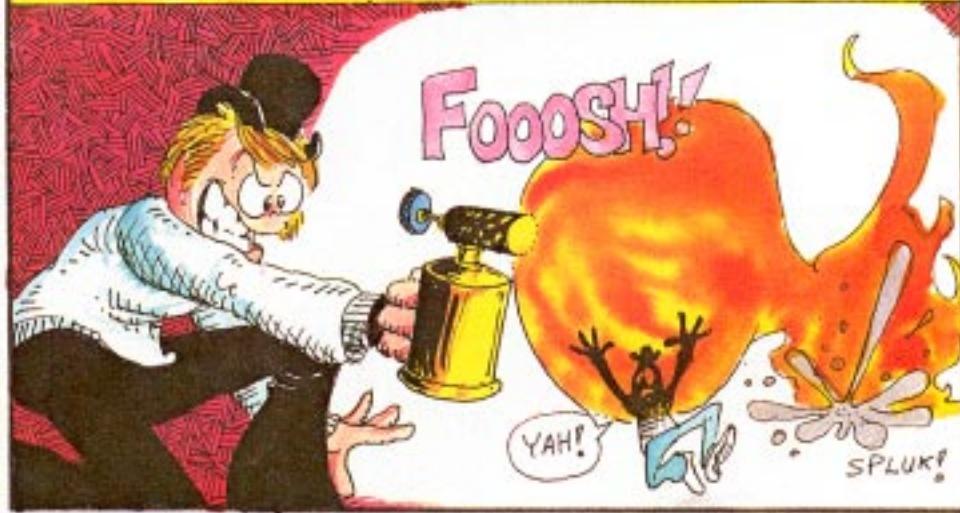
acrylic; a 1978 pastel and water color cover for Cricket Magazine; and *The Other Glass Teat*, a 1975 watercolor and acrylic.



HOWEVER - LEAD DOES HAVE A RELATIVELY LOW MELTING-POINT.



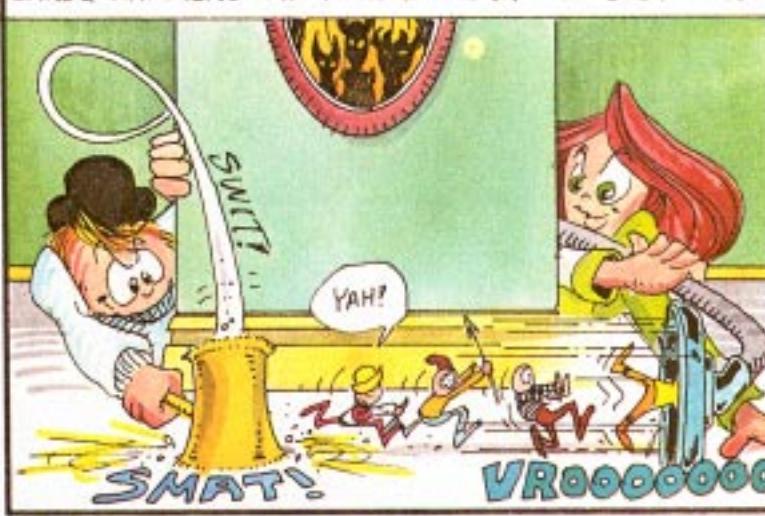
MERE SECONDS OF EXPOSURE TO A GOOD OXY-ACETYLENE TORCH WILL DO THE JOB NICELY,...



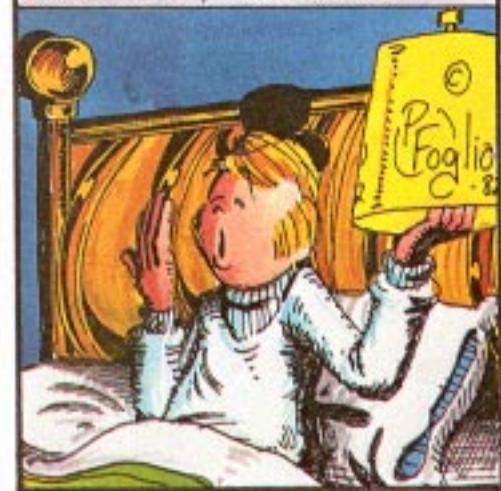
HOWEVER - YOU MUST BE CAREFULL.



METHODS THAT DO WORK CONSISTENTLY WELL ARE LARGE HAMMERS AND POWERFULL VACUUM-CLEANERS.



AND FINALLY, WE HAVE THE WORST PROBLEM, WHICH IS THAT MINIATURES, BEING METAL, DON'T SLEEP.

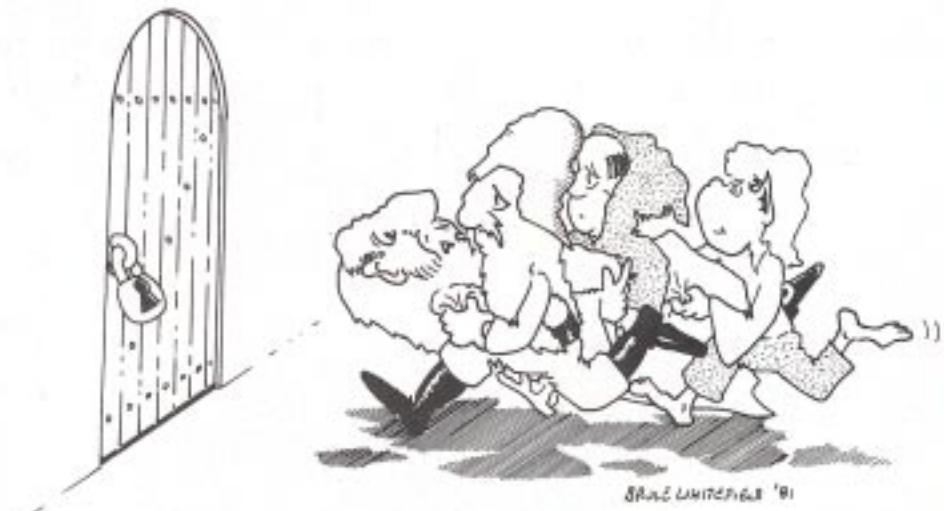


WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU DON'T EITHER. GOOD LUCK.

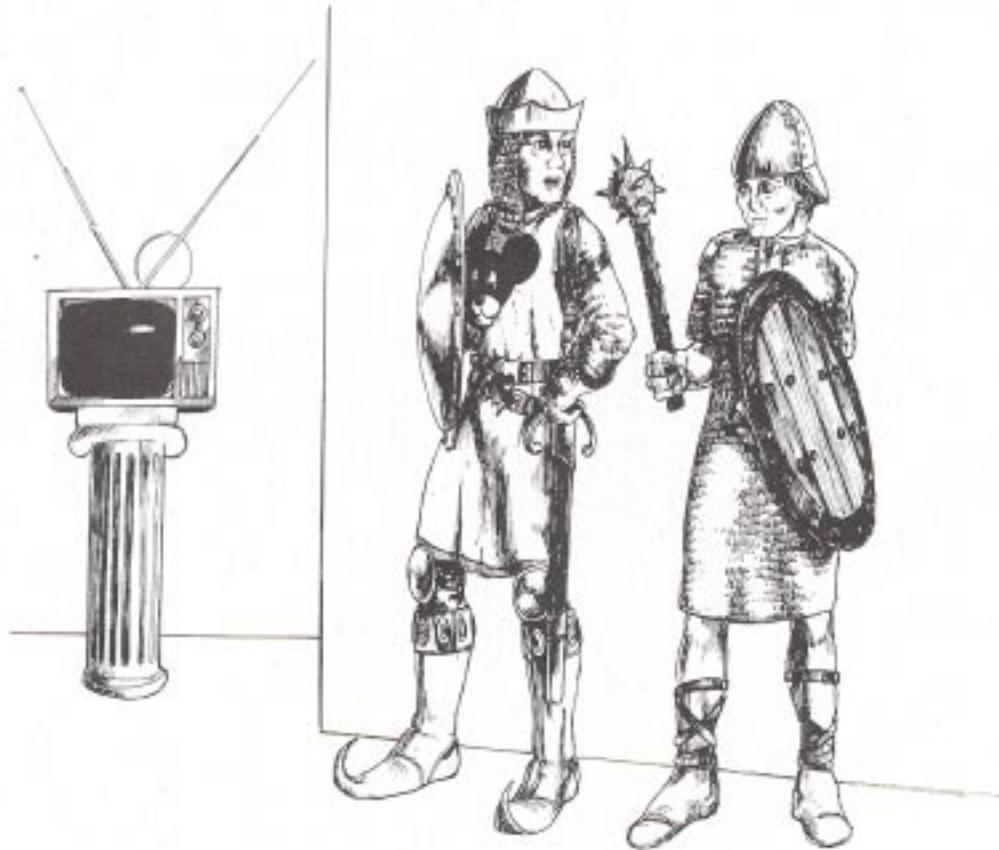




"LISTEN BOYS, I UNDERSTAND  
HOW DISAPPOINTED YOU ARE  
WITH MY DOOR OPENING SPELL.  
BUT ... "



"IT'S LIKE A BEHOLDER,  
BUT NOT AS SMART."



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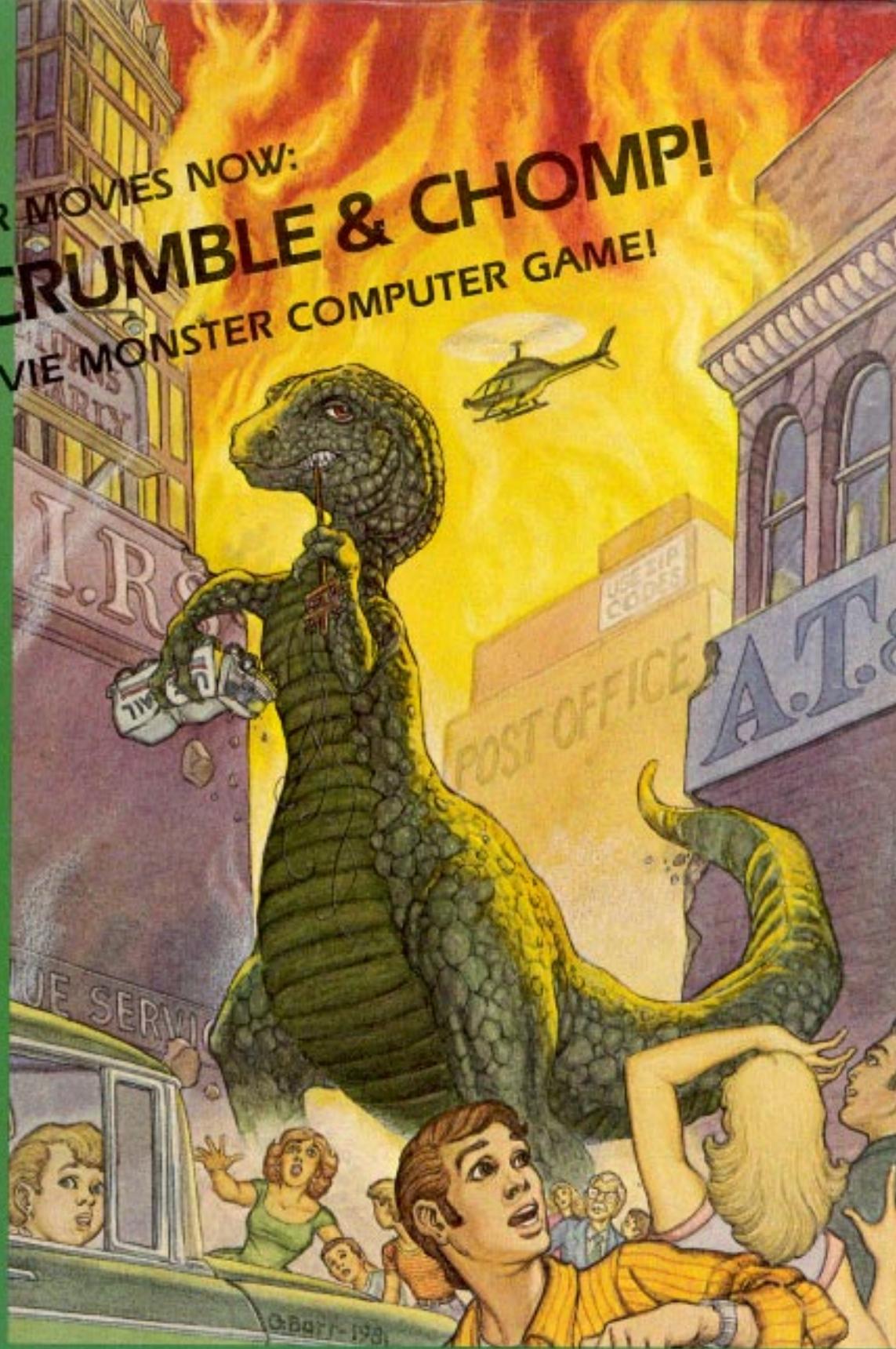
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